WHAT A CHILD OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE

H. R. STEVENSON

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What a Child Ought to Know About the Bible

BY

Rev. H. R. STEVENSON, M.A.

With Foreword by

DR. J. PATERSON SMYTH

AUTHOR OF "HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK

JAMES POTT & CO.

1922

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NOV 14 '22

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FOREWORD

by

DR. J. PATERSON SMYTH

(Author of "How We Got Our Bible," "The Bible in the Making," "St. Paul's Life and Letters," etc., etc.)

I congratulate the publishers and the American children on this delightful little book. Mr. Stevenson has always been my ideal of a children's teacher. I have not heard him for twelve years, but I could repeat to-day the capital little parable of the spider and the missionary box with which he enforced that last lesson which I heard.

These lessons will certainly be interesting. But more important is the fact that the children will not have to unlearn in later years what they here learn. The fatal defect in so many religious lessons to children is that they keep on timid and conventional lines and are afraid to speak out. There are truths of which there is now no question amongst thoughtful people which could easily be taught to children and are not, though ignorance of them in later life often leads to doubt and misunderstanding.

It is a good rule for Bible teaching even to children to be thoroughly candid, to assert nothing as certain which is not certain, nothing as probable which is not probable, and nothing as more probable than it is.

Mr. Stevenson tries to do this. He is a devout teacher but a straight and candid one, and such teachers will help to produce in the new generation a stronger and more intelligent faith.

J. PATERSON SMYTH.

PREFACE

To Parents.—Give a child a "point of view" on the Scriptures when young. He will then not have to unlearn much when older.

To Teachers.—The very best authorities have been searched,—the most careful research adopted.

To the numerous Scholars whose writings I have studied for this book,—God's blessing be on you for your work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Everyone who knows that George Washington was a great general will be able to understand this book. Because, if they are old enough to know that George Washington was a great general, they will be old enough to know that they may read all about him in the History of the United States.

2. Now, if you were to turn to your History of the United States, which you read in school, you will find on the first or second page, down near the bottom of the page, a date, 1916, or some other such date, not very long ago. Now I want to ask you, do you think that the History of the United States was written in 1916, or some other such date, not very long ago, and that none of it was written before then? Of course you will tell me that a lot of it was written before then, beginning with the oldest part first, and that it was all gathered together and made up-to-date in your book printed in 1916.

3. Now I want to ask you if the little boys and girls had a History of the United States to read and learn in the time when George Washington lived? Of course you will tell me again that they had a History of America, telling what had happened up to their time. So we learn

this, that History has been written slowly, bit by bit, the oldest part first.

4. Now I need not tell you that the little French boys and girls have a History of France to learn; the German boys and girls a History of Germany; but I would like to tell you that all nations have had a History, even those of long ago. You may be very clever at American History;—what History do you know better than American History?

5. Do you know all about Peter the Great and Queen Catherine? No. Then it is not Russian History that you know better than American History. Do you know all about Confucius and Buddha. No. Then it is not Chinese History. All about Antony and Brutus? No. It is not Roman History. All about Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David? Ah, yes. Why, you say, of course, I know those things as well as American History. Then you know the History of the Israelites as well as the History of the United States.

6. I suppose you would think it very strange if in your American History you found sermons of great preachers, poems of great poets, and after every great event a paragraph saying whether God was pleased or not, and the whole book called some name, like, for instance, "Masterpieces." Yet that was the way the Israelites wrote their History, putting in great sermons and great poems, and always talking about God, and then they put it all together, and we call it the "Bible." If you are wondering what the great poems are in the Bible, and what the great sermons are in the Bible, turn to the first pages of the Bible, and look at the names of the books of the Bible. From the Book of Job to

the Song of Solomon is a collection of great poems. From Isaiah to Malachi is a great collection of sermons, generally called prophecies.

7. Now we have found out this much so far. All History was written slowly, bit by bit, the oldest part first. Is the Bible different to all other history and written altogether, all at once? No. Is the Bible different to all other history, and written by an Angel? No. Is the Bible different to all other history because it has in it great sermons and great poems, and is always talking about God? Yes.

8. You would think it a very strange thing if the History of England told you that some day in England would be born a great King, greater than King Edward or King George, who would rule over the whole world. I am sure you would be wondering if he would be born in your time. Well, that is exactly what the Bible, the History of the Israelites, says about the Israelites, for it very often tells about the King that is coming.

9. What a strange thing it would be if English History told you about a great King; and you could come into the world again two thousand years later and find that he had really come. Well, the King really came to the Israelites, and part of the Bible, and that the most important part, tells us what He did, and said, and taught. People now-a-days call the part of the Bible which tells that the King is coming, and has sermons and poems,—the Old Testament; and that part which tells about the King Himself,—the New Testament.

10. Now if I were to ask you, who told the writer of your American History to write an American History,

you would probably tell me that you do not know; that he does not say who told him, and that for all you know he might have told himself to write it. And I could tell you that no writer of American History, or any other History, at any time, says that any one told him to write the History, except the men who wrote the Bible. And that the men who wrote the Bible say almost on every page that God told them to write it, and chose them to write it so as to teach people what God wanted them to do.

11. So we say that the Bible is the History of the Israelites, and the History of the great King, Jesus, who came; and God teaching the people of the world through the Israelites and through Jesus.

12. Supposing you were out in your garden, and your little brothers told you that you had better not do something which you were just going to do. You might say, what do they know about it, whether it is right or wrong. But if your big brother came down from your father upstairs, and gave you a message from your father not to do it, you would say, that is different, —it is the word of my father, a message from my father; he is speaking to me through my brother. So we say that the Bible is God's message to us; God speaking to us through the Israelites and through Jesus; it is God's word.

13. There is only one thing else I want you to learn in this chapter. I ask you, what is the difference between the American Nation and the United States? Why, you say, they are the same nation under different names. So the Israelite nation and the Jewish nation is the same nation under different names. Therefore,

you will always remember that the Jews that you see now are the descendants of the old Jews we read of in the Bible.

14. What have we learnt so far then? That all History was written slowly, bit by bit, the oldest part first. The Bible also was not written all at once, or by an Angel, but slowly, bit by bit, the oldest part first. That the Bible is God's message to us, God speaking to us through the Israelites and through Jesus, and so it is the Word of God.

CHAPTER II

PRE-HISTORIC, OR THE TIMES BEFORE HISTORY WAS WRITTEN

15. Never be frightened by a big word. It will not eat you up. You can always tame it to tell you what it means. Lots of girls and boys like to use big words, but you will notice that wise men and women use simple words as often as possible. But there are times when we can use one big word instead of three or four little simple words. For instance, we say "coronation" instead of saying "the crowning of the king." So we use "Pre-historic" instead of saying "the times before history was written." When you find "pre" in front of a word it generally means "before." Prefix—to fix before, prepay—to pay before, pre-historic—before history. You know how much quicker it is to write shorthand than to write the whole thing out. So it is quicker to use words like "Pre-historic" than always to be saying "the times before history was written." So now you ought to feel very big and wise, as you know that pre-historic means before history was written.

16. Now I want you to know that the Pre-historic times of the Bible, or the times before history was written, are found beginning from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, and going on to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Genesis,—Genesis being the first

Book of the Bible, and now divided up for us into chapters and verses. You will probably think that this little book which you are reading is very much like school, because in this chapter I talk to you about writing. But it is not the hard writing that you have to do in your school. You have learnt in the last chapter how history was written, bit by bit, the oldest part first; now you are to learn what happened before history was written.

17. Supposing you went out to the North American Indians, and you could speak their language. I am sure you have often played Indians, and you know they go about in tribes. Now if you were to ask an Indian to tell you the history of his tribe, he would not show you a history book, because he would not have one to show you. But he might tell you, our tribe used to live in the North, then went down to the South, and then came here, where I was born. You might ask him how he knew all that. He would reply, my father told me, and his father told him, and his father told him, and so on away back a great many years. So the story of the tribe was handed down from father to son. So I want to tell you that everything was handed down or told from father to son before history was written. So were the Great Lessons of the Beginning of the World, of Adam and Eve, of the Garden of Eden, of Cain and Abel, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel, told from father to son for many, many years before they were written down. When they were first told we cannot tell. When they were first written we cannot tell. The earliest written copy of them that we have was written about the time of Abraham.

18. Now we will suppose that you are still out among the Indian tribes, and that you wanted to teach them to write. You might draw on the sand a rough picture of something like this. Three little canoes and three little round circles as pictures of the sun. This would mean, "gone on a journey over the water for three days," each circle or sun meaning the sunshine or the day. This is what we call picture writing. I've no doubt you could think of a lot of messages like that which you could write on the sand, and if you taught the whole tribe they could write messages like that to each other after a while. Now that is exactly how in the very olden days before history was written people began to write. We call it picture-writing.

19. But we will say, instead of writing these pictures on the sand, you took some soft clay, and made it into the shape of a brick, and wrote these pictures on it very small, with a bit of iron for a pen; and then you made a fire and baked the bricks hard,—supposing you did all that,—well, that is just the way people in the very olden times began to write. But when you are in school, in writing, you are very careful almost to paint the letters, you would almost think you were drawing a picture; but if you look at your father's writing, you will find that he has not been very careful to form his letters well, because he has to write much faster now. So when people began to know how to write, they did not need to stick so close to the pictures, and could write faster, and so writing changed. It was this changed picture-writing that was used in the time when Abraham lived.

20. Now you are still out with the Indians, and you ask another boy of the same tribe about the history of

his tribe. And he says also that they came from the north to the south, and then to their present place, and he adds a lot of silly stories about a great bear and a great tiger having a fight, and the bear killing the tiger, and taking the tiger's tail, and dragging the tribe south by the tiger's tail, and a lot of other stories like that. Why, you would say, he imagined all that. So I want to tell you there are two accounts of the Beginning of the World, Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, and the Flood. One a straightforward account which we find in the Bible, and the other an account belonging to the Babylonian nation in the time of Abraham, which is something the same, except that it has silly imagined stories like one god killing another and skinning him, and hanging his skin up for the sky. And it is the last account, the silly imagined story account, that we may see for ourselves in the British Museum written on clay bricks in the Babylonian picture-writing.

21. Now we have got this far, and learnt this much. Pre-historic means the time before history was written. The history of a nation was told by father to son before history was written. So the story of the Beginning of the World in the Bible, of Adam and Eve, of the Garden of Eden, of Cain and Abel, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel, was told by father to son for many, many years before history was written. When they were first told, or first written, we cannot tell, but the earliest copy of them which we have is in the British Museum, the silly imagined account of the Babylonian nation written about the time of Abraham.

You remember in our last chapter we said that God taught the people of the world through the Bible; that

the Bible was God teaching the world in messages and lessons. Now let us look at those grand old lessons that God taught before history was written.

22. I must tell you here that the number seven has always amongst all nations been a very sacred number. And you can easily see how such a hard lesson as you read in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis about the Beginning of the World could be more easily learnt by remembering it by seven days. All girls and boys who have to learn anything off by heart know that it would be easier to learn it that way than almost any other way. Wise men tell us that God took centuries and ages, not days, to make the world;—the sacred number of seven days was the most convenient way of remembering it as it was told by father to son for a great many years before it was written down.

23. Now if I were to take you into a school, and we were to try to find out if the teacher of the school was a just teacher, and good and kind, supposing something like this happened. We got hold of a boy who was naughty and disobedient, and was always getting scoldings and whippings to make him good; and he told us the teacher was a brute. We would say, this disobedient boy tells us the teacher is a brute, because he is disobedient and naughty. We then get hold of another boy, who is the best behaved boy, and tries to do the best, and he tells us the teacher is perfect, just, good and kind. And then we get hold of the strangest boy of all, a boy who tells us there is not any teacher at all, but the children learn from each other. Which of these three would we believe? The disobedient boy who called the teacher a brute, because he wanted to

be disobedient and naughty? The good boy, who told us the teacher was good, perfect, just and kind? The strange boy who tells us the children learn from each other, and that there was no teacher? Why, we would take what the best boy told us, to be sure; he ought to know best.

24. So in the early days of the world there were nations who told us that their teacher, God, was a brute and foolish, because they were disobedient and wicked. But the one nation who, like the good boy, always tried to do right was the Israelite nation, which gives us the right picture of our great Teacher, God, telling us God is perfect, just, good and kind. So we say, everything in the Bible is sacred. So the Great Lesson of the Beginning of the World is sacred; it tells us that the world did not make itself, that the world was not made by a brute, but that the world was made by a good, just, perfect and kind God. So the Great Lessons of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, tell us that God taught the first pair of people He put into the world that He is just, good, perfect and kind, and punishes wicked people and helps good people.

25. Children, have you ever read a book called "Pilgrim's Progress"? If not, get it and read it. It tells the story of a Christian man in a children's story-book way. It is different from every other book, because it is so simple a child may read it, and so true that the wisest man must reverence it. The story of the Garden of Eden is the "Pilgrim's Progress" of the early days of the world. It is so simple a child could

remember it, and it is so true that the wisest man has to reverence it.

26. If I were to say to you, "The Path of Knowledge lies through the School," you would not think that I meant that there was a real path going from the primary classroom through all the others up to the highest classroom, and that there was a real path covered with real knowledge so you could walk on knowledge. And you would not say because I did not mean all this, that it was not true. But you would say, yes, it is perfectly true that the Path of Knowledge lies through the School.

27. So when the Bible says of Cain in Genesis, chapter four, verse ten, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth," because it doesn't mean that the blood really cried, we do not say, "it cannot be true." But we say that it means that Cain ought to be punished for his murder.

28. So when the Bible speaks about the Garden of Eden, because it may not mean a real speaking serpent, and real mysterious trees, we ought not to say it is not true. For it may mean that everyone is forbidden to touch or do certain things, the serpent is the bad suggestions that come to everyone, to steal jam or to shirk school when they are young, to steal reputations and shirk work when they are grown up, and that God always finds them out, and punishes the wicked people and helps the good people. What a wonderful lesson! No wonder in the early days of the world it helped people so much.

29. I have now to tell you that there are a great number of stories of the Flood in all nations, and even

amongst Indian and savage tribes. That the Flood was probably in the very, very early days of the world. And that "all the world" means "all the then known world." Suppose you were in a school where there were many bad boys and girls. You know when boys and girls get too wicked for school and home, they are sent to the Reformatory. The Reformatory is a place where they take boys and girls who are wicked and try to make them good. Supposing one day in your school of bad boys and girls, a van came from the Reformatory, and took away all the bad boys and girls, and there were only seven good ones left. Have you ever sat in a circle and told the boy next to you a story, and he tells the same story to the next boy, and so on all round the circle until it comes back to you again? I think you will be astonished if it comes back to you without being exaggerated. Well, it would not matter so much about the size of the van, or the size of the Reformatory, or how long it took to get the wicked boys out of the school, so long as you who remained remembered the lesson, that the wicked boys were taken to the Reformatory and the good boys were left to make a better school.

30. So we believe that in the early days of the world God took the wicked people by a flood into His great Reformatory, and left the good people to make a better world. We say that the story handed down by father to son for a great number of years might have got exaggerated, and we do not say that God should have guided it so that it could not have been exaggerated; but we do say that God guided it so that its Great

Lesson was written for us, that God punishes wicked people and helps good people.

31. Thus also in the Great Lesson of the Tower of Babel we find God not guiding the story so that it could not get exaggerated, but guiding it so that its Great Lesson was written for us. God punishes any short cuts to Heaven, or, we might say, happiness. If in your school you were all sitting together and copying from one another, your teacher would separate you, and tell you there was no short cut like that to knowledge. When you grew older you would be very thankful for that Lesson. So when the world grew older, the good and wise people were very thankful to God for guiding men to write down and preserve such a Great Lesson as the Tower of Babel, telling us that God's way into Heaven and happiness is the only way.

32. I have only one thing more to tell you before I finish this chapter. Some men who are living now have tried to tell us that these Great Lessons of God are not very good accounts of the Beginning of the World, the beginning of people in the world, and the beginning of different languages. But listen to what the wise and good men tell us about all their study through the telescope and the microscope and all that we call science. They tell us that the world was made in order, by stages; and this the Bible tells us in the first chapter. That there must have been a first pair; and this the Bible tells us in the Garden of Eden chapter. That all nations and languages came from one centre, probably Babylon, or Babel. That there is no reason why a great flood of a great river should not have come

amongst the few people who were gathered together in one place in the early, early days of the world.

33. What then have we learnt in this chapter? In the time before history was written, History was told from father to son. So the first eleven chapters of Genesis were told. When they were first written, or when they were first told, we cannot tell. But Abraham probably had them as his Bible written on clay bricks in the old picture-writing of the Babylonian language. In these great Lessons, the Beginning of the World, Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel, are found, as wise men tell us, very good accounts of the Beginning of the World, of people, and of nations and languages. But it is not so much the language of them that God guided, as that God guided the Great Lessons; that He Himself made the world, by stages; that He is perfect, good, just, and kind; that He punishes wicked people and helps good people; Great Lessons, indeed, before which we bow in reverence, and thank God for guiding and preserving them for us in His sacred book, the Bible, which is the teaching of God to the world, the Word of God to the people of the world.

CHAPTER III

THE PATRIARCHS

34. Here is another hard word for us to attack, and tame, to give us its meaning. You have often, I suppose, in your school given a dialogue, so you know that a dialogue is a conversation between two or more people. Do you know what a monologue is? Well, a monologue is a conversation by one person, if I may put it so. The last part of these two words, "dialogue" and "monologue," that is "logue" means "talk." Wherever you find "mono" before a word it means "one." It comes from a Greek word meaning "one." Monologue means talk by one; monotone means one tone; monotony means one sameness; monarch means the rule of one, for the last part of monarch, the "arch," comes from a Greek word meaning rule. Now you ought to feel very clever at knowing two Greek words; "mono" at the beginning of a word means one; "arch" at the end of a word means rule.

35. Can you think of any other word ending with "arch"? Why, Patriarch, to be sure. Yes. So patriarch means the rule of someone. Of whom? Did you ever hear of a boy calling his father "pater"? So "pater" means father. Patriarch then means the rule of the Fathers. When we talk then of the Patriarchs of the Bible we mean the Fathers of the Israelite nation, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. For in the days

of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph there was no Israelite nation proper, but Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were at the head of the family that afterwards grew so large that it became a nation. You may often read in the Bible a sentence like this, "The God of our Fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." So the part of the Bible I am going to tell you about now in this chapter is the period of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, beginning at the eleventh chapter of the Book of Genesis, and going on to the end of that Book.

36. You will remember that you have already learnt that in the days when Abraham lived there was picture-writing. Abraham, being a fairly well-to-do man of those times, having plenty of flocks and servants, must have known how to write and read the picture-writing. For when he lived there were libraries and schools. He might therefore have written down his own history, the story of his own life. So also Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph might have written the stories of their own lives. But whether they did or did not, we cannot tell. It has generally been thought that Moses wrote, or caused to be written, all that the Bible tells us up to the time of his death, which of course includes the Bible that Abraham probably had, and the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. It was possible for Moses to write it, because, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he must have known how to write. He would not probably write in a book, but on various papyrus papers which we will talk about later, these papyrus sheets a long time afterwards being formed into a book. It is highly probable that Moses wrote this part of

the Bible because he would have seen the Egyptians writing the history of their nation.

37. When you first go to school you start in the lowest class. And then you do not jump right up to the highest class; but you come up one class at a time. Now that is just the way God has taught the people of the world. He put them in the lowest class first, and then began to educate them. In your school when learning arithmetic you learn first how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. You learn the simple things first, and then your lessons get higher and higher. So before Abraham lived God taught the people of the world this simple Lesson, "God punishes the wicked, and helps the good people." What higher Lesson, then, did God teach Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph? Just this higher Lesson, "God is a Great Friend, to Whom we can speak, and Who speaks to us."

38. This then is one thing you ought to know and remember. Before Abraham lived the world learnt this Lesson. "God punishes the wicked, and helps the good people." Through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph the world learnt this Lesson, "God is a Great Friend, to Whom we can speak, and Who speaks to us."

39. How did God speak to Abraham? And how did Abraham speak to God? I want to ask you a question first. Has God ever spoken to you? Perhaps you will say, "No; I mean not in the way God spoke to Abraham." Why not in the way God spoke to Abraham? Does not God love you as much as He loved Abraham? Yes, He loves you just as much as He loved Abraham. Perhaps it is that you do not love God as much as Abraham did? I think you must

believe this, that God speaks to you just in the same way that He spoke to Abraham, and the more you love God the more He speaks to you. How does God speak to you, then?

40. If a man told you to take up a stone, and throw it at a cripple boy, something within you would tell you, "that's wrong." That is what you call your conscience. But it is God's voice saying to you, "NO." Have you ever helped an old lady across the street and felt very happy as you made up your mind to do it? That feeling of happiness is God's voice, saying, "YES." You know that there is a difference between your father's way of saying, "yes" and "no." You feel badly about one, and happy about the other. So when God says "NO," and we disobey Him, we feel miserable, and when God says "YES" we feel happy. Perhaps God spoke to Abraham in some other way now and again, but we can be sure that God for the most part spoke to Abraham, "YES" and "NO," as He speaks to us.

41. And how did Abraham speak to God? Why, the same way as we do,—went down on his knees, and spoke to God in prayer. Or offered a sacrifice to God, frequently and often offering something of his very own to God; just as we can do with our offerings of service in doing something for Him, and giving help and money, in which case, as the saying is, actions speak louder than words.

42. I must tell you now that when people hear God saying "NO," and disobey Him all the time,—God's voice to them becomes weaker and weaker, just as if they stuffed their ears with cottonwool. And they cease to

speak to God in prayer and action, and God is forgotten. If all the people of the world grew to be like that, what a wicked place the world would be. Thank God, then, that Abraham heard His voice and made God his Friend.

43. Now you know that God did not love Abraham more than He loves you, but that Abraham probably loved God better than you love God. God has no favourites. God did not call and choose Abraham instead of the king of Babylon, God did not call and choose Jacob instead of Esau, God did not call and choose Joseph instead of his brothers, just because He wanted to. God is not careless in picking out leaders of men. Who is the leader of your class in school, who is the head of your class? And why is he there? Because he loves to learn more than the others do. No one who does not love to learn is ever the leader of his class. Now, who were the leaders for God, and why did He choose them? No one who did not love God very much could be a leader. Therefore God would not call or choose the king of Babylon, Esau, Joseph's brothers, because they did not love Him enough, but loved themselves too much. But God called and choose Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, because they loved Him so much and made a Friend of Him.

44. Now you must not think that everybody that loved God in the old days was perfect. Perhaps I know what you think about Abraham. You probably think that everything he did was perfectly right. No. Abraham told a lie when he said once that his wife was his sister. Isaac told the same lie about his wife. Jacob did what was wrong when he pretended to his old father that he was Esau. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph

were not perfect. Why were they not perfect? Because God gave to them like He has given to you, the power to do good or to do bad things. They sometimes chose to do bad things, but mostly they chose to do good things. I wonder if it is the same with you. But as they grew older they got better and happier, and chose to do good more and more. I wonder if it will be the same with you. Because they loved God, God chose them to be leaders. I wonder if you will be a leader, and an example to people how to live. Because they loved God, and God therefore chose them as leaders, they did a tremendous amount of good. I wonder if it will be the same with you. If it is the same with you, as we older ones know, you will thank God long and earnestly for His sacred Book, His Word, the Bible.

45. So much did Abraham love God that he was going to offer his beloved son to God. And God told him to offer a ram instead. So much did Abraham love God, that when he wanted a wife for his son, Isaac, he trusted God entirely to guide him in his choice. So much did Jacob love God, that he was continually seeing the angels of God in his dreams. So much did Joseph love God, that all the miseries he went through, slavery, temptation, prison life, only increased his love for God. Would you be willing to offer what you loved to God? Do you ever dream about the angels of God, because you think so much about God? Will you, if you marry, trust entirely to God to guide you? Would you, if you had to go through many miseries, love God all the more? If you try to do all this, you will grow up into a beautiful, happy, and helpful person. Ah! they had

love for God in those days. They knew what faith in God meant.

46. Perhaps you will think I have been preaching you a sermon. But I have been doing no such thing. I have just given you the sermon that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph preached to the world. Love God, speak to Him, hear Him, for He is a Friend.

47. Now, in order that we may understand the period of the Patriarchs better, let us imagine for a few moments, that Moses is sitting down with his papyrus sheets, to write the history of Israel. You will remember that Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and that is why his descendants were called Israelites. How is Moses to find out about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph? Well; Jacob's children and their families, had settled in Egypt under a king who liked them. For many, many years, the children increased, until they became a small nation. Then a new line of kings came, who hated them and made them into slaves. When they became slaves, they would not have much time to learn writing and reading; but they would often tell, we may be sure, in their rude slave huts, about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the great fathers of their nation. So the story would be handed down from father to son, perhaps written and preserved, perhaps written and taken from them by their slave-masters, perhaps never written at all. Do you think that the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph might have got exaggerated, being told for so many years? Moses would have a very hard task. We do not say God should have taken Moses' hand and guided his pen. We do not say God should have made an Angel write it, so that there could be

no mistakes. But we say and believe that God guided and preserved for us, the Great Lesson that He taught through the Patriarchs.

48. Therefore, when we read of men living to the age of nearly a thousand, what are we to say? Well, just this much. In the early days they might have lived to that age; or perhaps their ages were mistakenly exaggerated, the story going through so many people. Supposing you were out in the playground with the rest of your class, and the head boy of the class comes out and says, "Teacher wants you all to behave yourselves." If that was quickly repeated from boy to boy until when you heard it, it was something like this, "Teacher wants you all to be good, and the head boy was with the teacher for twenty minutes, and is eighteen years old." Now, if you believed that the head boy was with the teacher only five minutes, and was only fourteen years old, would you take the boy who gave you the message by the throat, and say, "You're a liar; the teacher never sent the message." No, I think you would say, "The message is certainly from the teacher, but in getting to me some of the things that do not matter have got exaggerated." So we say about Moses. He has got the Message and Lesson of the Patriarchs clear; it would be a wonder, indeed, if some of the things that do not matter had not got exaggerated.

49. What have we learnt then in this chapter? The period of the Patriarchs, means the period of the fathers of the Israelite nation; the name of the nation, Israelite, being taken from Jacob's changed name, Israel. God has educated the world with simple Lessons first. In the pre-historic period God's Lesson was, God punishes

bad people and helps good people. In the period of the Patriarchs, God's Lesson was, God is a Friend Who speaks to you and to Whom you can speak. God spoke to Abraham the same as He speaks to you. The feeling of happiness is God saying, "YES." The feeling that you ought not to do a certain thing is God's "NO." Conscience is God's voice. The more you love God the more God chooses you for some great work. The Patriarchs were not perfect, but they were always struggling to become perfect. In the story of the Patriarchs, God's Message and Lesson is clear; it would be a wonder, indeed, if some of the things that do not matter, going through so many years, had not got exaggerated.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIMES OF MOSES

50. Do you remember how Moses when a little boy was placed in an ark or box of bulrushes? Well, these bulrushes grew as a water plant with great reeds, and a box of these made in the time of king or Pharaoh Rameses II. of Egypt, is to be seen in the British Musuem. But at the centre of the plant there were strong reeds which the Egyptians took and polished, and used as stiff paper to write on. They called it Papyrus, and it is from this word that we get our word "paper." It was on these papyrus sheets that Moses would write.

51. If I were to ask you if you knew when Napoleon lived, you would probably say, "Oh, yes, at the same time as the Duke of Wellington lived." And you know that you could read about the struggle between them, both in English History and in French History. But, of course, you would expect English History (England being the winning side) to be fuller of it than French History. So in the times of Moses, we read of the struggle of the Israelites and the Egyptians, both in the Bible and in Egyptian History; fuller, of course, in the Bible, because the Israelites won the struggle. If two schools were having a football match, and a boy of one school came to you and said, "Our school won," you would feel pretty sure of it. But if another boy from the other school came to you and said, "Our school lost the match," you would be perfectly

sure of it. So the Bible comes to us and tells us, that the Israelites fought against the Egyptians, and won their freedom. And then Egyptian history comes to us and tells us, "We lost in our struggle with the Israelites." This makes it doubly sure to us that there was a struggle, that the Israelites won, and that the Egyptians lost.

52. It is this struggle between the Israelites, the family of Jacob which had grown into a nation, and the Egyptians that we are going to study in this chapter on the times of Moses. I wonder if you would like to see the Pharaoh or king of Egypt, who oppressed the Israelites so wickedly, the Pharaoh before whom Moses stood. I wonder if you would be astonished if I told you that you could go and see,—not him,—but his body. I think you would probably be astonished, yet if you go to the Museum in Cairo in Egypt, you may see his mummy, that is, his body preserved by the use of spices. But how do we know exactly that this is really the body or mummy of the Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites?

53. Well, you know how English history is divided up into groups or families or dynasties, such as, the Norman kings, the Stuarts, etc.; so different families or groups or dynasties reigned in Egypt. You know also how rich people have their family vaults or burying lots, where all the members of the family are buried. So in Egypt the families of the different groups or dynasties had their tombs, where all the members of the group were buried. And you know, also, that we write the names of our dead and inscriptions on the tombstones over their graves. So the Egyptians, on the tombs of their kings, wrote their names and lengthy inscriptions.

And you know likewise, how to-day, when we put up a monument, we inscribe on it the reason why it was erected. So did the Egyptians. And it is from these inscriptions on the tombs and monuments of Egypt and the papyrus sheets,—that wise men learn Egyptian history. But all these are now mostly buried in the sand, and have to be dug up and read. I suppose that only a small number of these incriptions that are buried in Egypt have been dug up and read. Amongst the many more that will be dug up in the future we may find many things written about the Israelites. But have any of the few that have been discovered and dug up got any reading on them about the Israelites? Yes, one inscription tells us about a revolution on the part of the Israelites in the reign of Meneptah, one of the kings of Egypt belonging to the Rameses group of kings. We read on the inscriptions also, that Rameses II., who reigned just before Meneptah, was the greatest builder of all the kings of Egypt, and built huge treasure-cities. The mummy of Rameses II. may be seen in the Museum at Cairo, Egypt.

54. Now we look at the Bible, and see what the Bible says about Egypt. First, you will remember that one king of Egypt made Joseph head of the nation, prime-minister of Egypt, as we would say, and even allowed Jacob to bless him; while later on, another king arose who hated the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. Well, this fits in exactly with a portion of Egyptian history. Before the Rameses group of kings, the Shepherd kings lived, and these Shepherd kings had obtained the kingdom by force, and were hated by the real Egyptians. Then the Rameses kings of real Egyptian

royal blood regained the throne. Wise men think, then, that the Shepherd kings were reigning when Joseph was living, and the Rameses kings when Moses lived. Secondly, the Bible says about Potiphar, Joseph's master, "Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian." Why add that he was an Egyptian? Were they not all Egyptians? No. The Shepherd kings were reigning, and it was indeed strange that a real Egyptian should hold such a high position. Thirdly, the Bible says about the time of Moses, "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Why? Because the Shepherd kings had been ruling, and they were not of real Egyptian blood.

55. Photographs have been taken of the treasure-cities built by Rameses II., and they show some bricks built with straw, and the upper bricks built without straw. Do you remember how the Bible says, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick." "There shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks." "And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Rameses." A papyrus sheet has been found saying that Rameses was built by Rameses II. Many of these papyrus sheets have been found, telling about the time of Rameses II. One tells us that the land of Goshen (where the Bible tells us that the Israelites dwelt) had been left as pasture land for cattle to wandering shepherds "since the days of our forefathers." Shortly after in the same reign all these people had disappeared. A letter later on says Arab tribes had been allowed into the land of Goshen: wise men suppose to fill up the place left by the Israelites.

56. You have often played, I should think, with picture-puzzles, which are all cut up into peculiar little pieces, and you have to piece them together so as to make a large picture. You may be surprised to know that the history of the world is just such a picture as that, in little pieces here and there of different nations; and many big learned men spend their whole lives trying to piece them together into a history of the world. When the history of one nation speaks about another nation, the wise men who write history try to fit the two together. And how delighted you are in your picture game when you make one piece fit into another! Why, it fits exactly, you say. So the times of Moses fits in exactly with the times of Rameses II. and Meneptah of Egypt.

57. What do we gain then by knowing all this? Just this much. That the account of Moses and the journey of the Israelites from Egypt must have been written down by men who had been through the struggle. So while we do not know whether any of the Patriarchs wrote any of the Bible, we may feel pretty sure that Moses did. For if this part of the Bible had been written later, say in the times of David, or when the prophets were preaching and writing, everything would not fit in so well. But at the same time you must remember that Moses probably only wrote on the papyrus sheets, and these a long time afterwards were gathered into a book.

58. If I were to ask you which was the more wonderful thing for God to do,—send the plagues and take the Israelites across the Red Sea, or give Moses the Ten Commandments,—I wonder which you would

say was the more wonderful. I will tell you that the more wonderful thing was the giving Moses the Ten Commandments. It is a very wonderful thing to us that God should make the water go the way he wants with a strong wind, or that He should produce a great number of frogs or boils, or send darkness; but it is a more wonderful thing for God to make men and women and children so that they may understand His commandments. That is the most wonderful thing in the world; and the reason why we should love the Bible is not because it tells us of wonderful things like the plagues; but because it is telling us always of the most wonderful thing in the world,—God making men and women and children so that they may understand His commandments.

59. The plagues of Egypt, just the same, and the crossing of the Red Sea were wonderful things. There is an inscription in Meneptah's tomb which scholars think refers to the sudden death of Meneptah's eldest son. Supposing an old, old friend of yours, one whom you knew to be very good, came to you and told you some wonderful things. Would you believe he was a good man because he told you wonderful things? Or would you believe the wonderful things because he was a good man? Well, the Bible is the old, old friend, the best book in the world; we do not believe it is a good book because it has in it wonderful things; but we believe the wonderful things because the Bible is so good. If a lot of little boys came round you and said, you ought not to believe these wonderful things until you can prove absolutely every one of them did happen; you would say, No, I will believe these wonder-

ful things because my good friend told me them, and I will believe them until you little boys can prove absolutely to me that they did not happen. Now I want to tell you that no little boys, or big men either, have ever proved absolutely that any one of the wonderful things in the Bible did not happen.

60. Have you ever wondered why God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and how He did it? I would like to ask you a question. Did God ever harden your heart? Perhaps you say, "no." Well, let me put the question another way. Did you ever do anything wrong, get angry, tell a lie, or disobey, and take pleasure in it, and never feel sorry for it afterwards? Well, every time you do this you are hardening the feelings of your heart. And God works with you. You hear God's "YES" or "NO," and you may either obey or disobey God. When you disobey Him, He hardens your heart; when you obey Him, He makes your heart great. God did not harden Pharaoh's heart, and then punish him for what Pharaoh could not help doing. You may notice that the Bible tells us both sides of the question, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart," and, "Pharaoh hardened his own heart," exactly the same number of times. Pharaoh and God worked together. Pharaoh disobeyed and God hardened his heart. Moses and God worked together. Moses obeyed, and God gave him a great heart. So now you know how God hardens hearts, and makes great hearts; and how your own heart may be hardened, or made great.

61. Did God give a higher Lesson then to Moses than He gave to the pre-historic times, or in the times of the Patriarchs? In the first place, God made Moses

write the Lessons down in the first four commandments; and then added this higher Lesson in the other six commandments, "Be a Friend to your neighbour as well as to God." In your school, no doubt, you have rules of order and discipline. We will suppose that they are not written out, but that the teacher is constantly repeating them to you. One day the head-boy of your class stands up before you and reads off the rules one by one, in splendid language, and then pastes them up on the wall. You would say "Oh, the teacher must have helped him." So Moses wrote down the rules of order and discipline that God had constantly repeated to the world and to the Patriarchs, and we say, "The Ideas are not those of Moses, but of God. God must have helped him." The Ideas of order and discipline in the Ten Commandments are far above the ability of Moses, and must have been given by God, through Moses.

62. The other laws that we find in the Bible, parts of the Book of Exodus, the Book of Numbers, the Book of Leviticus, and the Book of Deuteronomy, these other laws are regulations for church services, priests' dresses and habits, and laws of the land. They are not above the ability of man, and are mostly meant for regulations for the time being.

63. There is one peculiar and extraordinary thing we find in this portion of the Bible. That is,—the ass speaking to Balaam. Some scholars have thought that Balaam was dreaming at the time. The story changes so quickly, Balaam is in a great company of princes, —then he is suddenly alone on his ass, a wall on each side of him, and the ass speaks,—then again he is with

the princes. All so like a dream. Now you have no right to say that God could not make the ass speak. But I do not think that God would be very angry with you if you believed that God made the ass speak to Balaam in a dream.

64. I wonder if you are the sort of boy or girl who is fond of an argument. I hope not. But there was once a great argument about whether Moses wrote part of the Bible or not. Only a few years ago there were some men who said Moses could not have done so because no one had learned to write when Moses lived. Have you ever gone down to the seaside with a spade to dig in the sand? Well, you will be surprised when I tell you that many wise men dig like that all their lives; but not for shells or fish; but in Greece and Egypt, and all through the East, for writings of the past. And it is through them that we know in Moses' day nearly everyone wrote, and even in Abraham's day. So those who said there was no writing when Moses lived were wrong. And for all other arguments, if you could live long enough, you would probably find that they will be exactly as the Bible says.

65. What then have we learnt about the times of Moses? Just this at least. Israelite history fits in with Egyptian history exactly at the time of the Shepherd Kings and the Rameses group; we learn this from the old kings' tombs and monuments and papyrus sheets. Moses wrote on these papyrus sheets, and afterwards they were gathered into a book. The Ten Commandments we say cannot be the ideas of Moses or any other man; they must be the Ideas of God. We believe in the miracles of the Bible because the Bible is so

good. We do not believe the Bible is good, because of the miracles in it. You may grow hard-hearted as Pharaoh; or great-hearted like Moses; you and God work together. God has the first say. God says to you, "do good." You have the second say, and it depends on whether *you* wish to be good or bad, whether you grow great-hearted like Moses, or hard-hearted like Pharaoh. That is what learned men call free-will. You might wonder what blackening boots or washing dishes has to do with God hardening Pharaoh's heart or your heart; but the boy who begins to blacken his father's boots, or the girl who begins to wash dishes for mother, and keeps on doing other kind things without being asked will grow up with a great heart like Moses, which God will never harden.

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES

66. Moses, as you will remember, led the Israelites when they were a nation of slaves out of Egypt. He then with great difficulty formed them into a real strong nation. He always believed that there was a land further on, the land of Canaan, where God intended them to settle. But Moses, as you will also remember, died before he came to the land, and Joshua took up the leadership of the nation. Now I used to wonder when I was a boy why God allowed any fighting or war in the world,—why He did not just lead the Israelite nation without any fighting or war into the land of Canaan. And indeed the world would be a great deal better without war. Do you think then it is God's fault that there is fighting and war in the world? Do not ever think that. If you would like to understand why there is fighting and war in the world, you must try to think very hard over what I am going to tell you.

67. Have you ever seen that children's game of Theatre? There is a stage, and curtain that comes down and goes up, and little cardboard actors that you pull with strings and wires, which are called puppets, and someone reads the play. These puppets do just what you want them to do whenever you pull the strings.

You could not love those puppets; and they could not love you. Now, learn this, that God did not make men and women and children like puppets. Because He wanted to love them and have them love Him. Then, do you remember how you used to make your doll do just what you wanted. But what a different thing when you had a little baby brother or sister? Why baby could move his own arms, could stretch them out to you of his own accord. God did not make men and women and children as dolls, but he made them so that they could move as they liked, and stretch out their arms to Him, and love Him of their own accord. Baby, we say, has an instinct to love you. So men and women have an instinct, as we say, to love God. But baby also as he grows up may be naughty and selfish. So, then, men and women and children may be naughty and selfish. God allows people to choose to be either good or wicked and selfish.

68. It is the same thing with nations. The one nation, as we have seen, which chose to be good, and stretch forth its arms, as we might say, to God, the Israelite nation, that nation God called to take possession of the land of Canaan. But if the one nation of the Israelites chose to be good, the other nations chose to be wicked. Well, if a man tries to be good, God will help him to be good. If a man tries to be wicked, God will punish him sooner or later. And everybody knows this. Even in savage lands, to-day, when missionaries arrive they find out that the savages know this, and have some way of asking their gods to forgive them. Was this war, then, the best thing for the wicked nations in Canaan and for the Israelites. The only

thing the other nations would recognize was power. The laws and the Lessons of the Israelites could not alter their wicked ways. God was forming a nation to teach the world; and no nation can be formed without bravery. You must never think that God took these other wicked nations, killed them in war, and then, because they were wicked, cast them into Hell. We have no right to think that way about God. Supposing your brothers had smallpox. They would be taken away to the hospital. You would know, at any rate, this much: they were taken away so that you would not get the disease. Whether they will get better or not you cannot tell. Now I want to tell you that these other nations had habits far worse than smallpox, and brought them on by their own wickedness. We know this much: God took them away so that the Israelites would not get their habits. Whether they will get better in God's hospital for wicked people we cannot tell; but we may be perfectly sure that God will always do the fair thing. One thing more you must remember about the wars of the Israelites. They never took any of the treasures for themselves. They gave it all to God. You may remember how Achan was stoned because he kept some of the treasure for himself.

69. In the Book of Joshua we are first told about the crossing of the River Jordan on dry ground, like the crossing of the Red Sea. About six hundred years ago a piece of a mountain fell into the River Jordan making a dam, and it took the waters four hours to flow over it. Of course we cannot say that God stopped the waters in the same way when the Israelites crossed; we only know He did do it in some way. Next we are

told that at the blast of trumpets the Walls of Jericho fell. I wonder if God sent an earthquake. We do not know. Some people think that the blasts of the trumpets might have done the damage. Do you know that a professor of Cambridge tells us that when the first iron bridge was built, a fiddler came along and said he could fiddle it down. The workmen laughed. He played until he struck the keynote of the bridge, and it swayed so violently the workmen begged him to stop. Have you ever noticed a piece of furniture sing in a room when you strike a certain note on the piano? Whether God made the Walls fall by earthquake, blast of trumpet, or some other way we cannot tell; we have only been told that they did fall. The third wonderful thing in the Book of Joshua is Joshua commanding the Sun to stand still. This, many think, is poetry, as the Bible tells us it was written in the Book of Jasher, which most people think was a collection of patriotic poems, and it means that the Israelites thanked God for giving them light until they conquered their enemies. But God could, certainly, if He liked, make the Sun and moon and earth, and all the stars, too, stand still. A man can stop a machine quite easily, which is many times more powerful than himself. God could stop the Sun and moon and earth and stars, which are very much less powerful than He is Himself. We must remember that this is probably Hebrew poetry. You have read I suppose in school Tennyson's poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade." There is one famous line that runs like this, "Into the Valley of Death, into the Jaws of Hell, rode the six hundred." Now he did not mean there was a real valley of death and that

Hell had jaws. People three thousand years from now will probably know much more about death and Hell than we do; just as we now know much more about the Sun and moon than people in Joshua's time. If the people three thousand years from now were to say we believed in a real valley of death, and that Hell had jaws, they would know very little about the splendid way English poetry has of putting things. So we must remember that Hebrew poetry had a very splendid way of putting things.

70. But whether God sent an avalanche into the waters of the upper Jordan; whether God sent an earthquake under the walls of Jericho; whether God lengthened the day for Joshua in some mysterious way; we do not know. But we know this much: God did these things in some way and each of these three things the Israelites thought of as coming from the hand of God. They occurred just at the right time. You will remember in English History the Spanish Armada. If a Bible writer were describing the Armada he would write something like this: "And the Lord saith unto Howard of Effingham, I have given unto thine hand the Armada, and the King thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall go out, ye men of war, and go round about the ships of Spain, but ye shall not touch thereof. And I, the Lord thy God, shall smite them and they shall flee and I will destroy them." God enabled England to conquer the Armada in a mysterious way. God enabled the Israelites to conquer the Canaanites in a mysterious way. The English writers tell us about the wind, and leave out God. The Israelite writers tell us about God, and leave out the

wind and earthquake and avalanche. Indeed Queen Elizabeth had a medal with this inscription: "God blew with His wind and they were scattered." The English historians may forget God fought for them soon after the danger was over. But the Bible historian never forgot God's work and help. God worked a miracle for England. God worked miracles for the Israelites. Some day I dare say people will be foolish enough to say and write that the Armada could not have happened. The Armada was the door to England's conquest of the sea. Jericho was the door to the conquest of Canaan.

71. There were two things that used to puzzle me when a boy about the Book of Joshua. The first was that Achan, who took some of the treasures for himself should have his whole family stoned with him. Why should the little children be stoned for their father's fault? Now right here you must understand that Christ had not yet come and taught that we should love our enemies. You must not judge the Israelites as if Christ had already taught them. They did not know any better; and even to-day when a man does some wrong we allow it to disgrace the whole family, which we certainly should not do. The second thing that was a puzzle to me, until I learnt that the Israelites had to learn their lessons gradually in God's great school of the World, was the family warfare. A murder might be committed. The murdered man's nearest relative would then try to kill the murderer, and there would be a regular family war, lasting for many years. God, however, taught Joshua a higher idea of justice when

He suggested to Joshua to appoint cities of refuge where murderers could run to and await their proper trial.

72. You will remember the Israelite nation was divided up into tribes. In the Book of Joshua we are told how the Israelites conquered the land, and how the land was divided amongst the different tribes. After Joshua died there was no regular leader of the nation, but when an enemy attacked, a leader arose in the part of the country attacked, and he was called a Judge. This is how we get the name of the Book of Judges. It is not necessary for you to know the names of all the Judges, but there are one or two of them you should remember. For instance, Ehud. What would you think if in war one general would come out with the white flag of truce (which as you know means that he has a message, and such a flag is never fired at), what would you think if that general were to march up under that flag to the other general's tent, and while they were alone secretly kill him? Why it would be a terrible deed. Yet that is what Ehud did. There was, of course, no white flag in those days, but he pretended he had a secret for the fat King Eglon of Moab. When they were alone Ehud murdered him. It was a terrible deed. But remember you must not judge the Israelites as if Christ had already taught them. The Israelites had to learn goodness gradually in God's great school of the World.

73. Then again Deborah and Barak defeat Sisera. And you may remember the woman Jael inviting the defeated general Sisera into her tent to hide, and then treacherously killing him by driving a nail into his head. A treacherous act, we say. And Deborah and

Barak sang a song that Jael was blessed above all women. This was not what God thought; but it was just what Deborah and Barak thought, and was just the thing they were likely to think, living so many years before Christ.

74. Then Gideon has his cakes consumed by God's fire, and his fleece of wool first full of dew while all around is dry, and then dry while all around is wet with dew. He knew by these signs that God would make him free his country. Just as Joan of Arc knew by signs and visions that she was to free her country of France. Gideon, first of all, told all the cowards to go home. Then as he was going to try a stratagem, and did not want any slow moving men who would lag behind, or fat men who would lose their footing going down the mountains, and roll down into the enemy's camp, he put them through the test of sipping the water. He took three hundred nimble warriors with a torch, pitcher, and trumpet each. The trumpets blew, the pitchers were broken, the torches flashed, and the enemy in their confusion and surprise slew each other.

75. Then Jephthah, going out to fight, made a foolish vow that he would sacrifice to God the first thing that came forth out of his house when he arrived back if he gained the victory. Alas! it was his daughter. Jephthah, we say, should have broken his vow, rather than sacrifice his daughter. But in those days Jephthah thought differently. It reminds us of Herod's promise to Salome, whereby John the Baptist lost his head. It ought to warn us against making foolish and wild vows and promises.

76. Samson was a man who had been given a great gift,—the gift of strength. But he used it rather to show off than for God. He did freak things with his strength instead of using it, say, to lead an army, in the days when strength was greatly admired and followed. He carried away the gates of Gaza, tied foxes' tails together, and set fire to villages, killed a lion, and slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, probably driving them over a cliff by those in front backing on to those behind. The main point is that he "showed off," instead of using his strength well for God. Probably you yourself have a gift from God,—the gift of kindness, the gift of beauty, the gift of learning, perhaps the gift of strength. Do you only use kindness just when you want? Do you use your beauty or learning just to show off? Do you use your strength to bully smaller boys? I hope not. I hope you use your kindness all the day long; use your beauty and learning to make people happy and more useful; use your strength to protect weaker boys.

77. Did God teach the people in the time of Joshua and the Judges a still higher lesson than he had taught Moses? After each Judge had delivered the Israelite nation from an enemy we read this: "The Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord punished them, then they cried out unto the Lord, and the Lord delivered them." They learnt then through many hard struggles and battles that the first lesson God taught to the World was perfectly true,—God punishes wicked people. But they also learnt that if they came to God and told Him they were sorry for their wickedness, and would try to do better, God would

help them. That indeed was a higher lesson. If you tell God you are sorry for being wicked, and will try to do better, God will forgive you, and help you. It is called repentance. God is a forgiving God.

78. Now during the journey of the Israelites through the Wilderness, and during their struggles with their enemies, the slaves who had come from Egypt had not any opportunity to learn very much education. There were no schools or colleges. The great judge, Samuel, whom we read about in the 1st Book of Samuel, formed schools which he called "schools of the prophets." These were meant to educate and train men as teachers, who would go out and educate and train the whole nation. In these schools were studied reading, writing, and music, but the chief studies were history and the making of poems or psalms. The young men were also trained in solemn religious services.

79. About this time the people wanted a King. Had they ever wanted a King before? Yes. They asked Gideon, the judge, to be King, and he replied, "The Lord shall rule over you." Their great thought was that they were unlike other nations, for they had God for their King, and he raised up deliverers or generals, or judges, at different times to lead them in battle. But now they ask for a King *like other nations.* The old man, Samuel, wished indeed they would wait until they were fit for a King. Would they not wait until a man came forth out of Samuel's schools fit to reign? No, Saul, unable to read or write, a warrior king only, the tallest man in the kingdom was chosen. In one way it was a splendid choice, because Saul lived in the centre of the kingdom, and drew all the tribes

together around a common centre. Samuel was the last and the greatest of the judges. The third great name in Israelite history. Abraham kept pure, and handed down, through his family, the Lessons of God. Moses turned a nation of slaves into a real organized nation. Samuel by his schools educated and trained the nation.

80. As to who wrote the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges, we may be pretty sure that these books were written first not as a book, but in fragments, shortly after the events happened, and some little time afterwards gathered together into a book.

81. The man who wrote your American History wrote it in this way. He looked up all the old documents, and then wrote them all out in order *in his own words and style*. The men who wrote the Bible looked up all the old documents, and put them in almost as they were written. For instance, men write Egyptian history now from the inscriptions on old tombs and monuments and papyrus writings, but they put it all down in their own words and style. Now in the Bible many of these old documents are mentioned by name. The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Numbers xxi. 14). The Book of Jasher (II. Samuel i. 18). The Books of God and Nathan. The Books of Shemiah and Iddo, and many more. So in the Books of Joshua and Judges, the old documents were afterwards gathered together into a Book.

82. The time of Joshua and Judges then was the fourth class as it were in God's school of the world, each class learning a higher lesson.

Class I. The Prehistoric times, before Abraham.

Lesson—God punishes bad people and helps good people.

Class II. The Patriarchs. Lesson—God is a great Friend Who speaks to us and to Whom we may speak.

Class III. Moses. Former Lessons and rules written out in ten commandments, with the extra Lesson to treat our neighbour as we would ourselves or God.

Class IV. The times of Joshua and the Judges. If we do evil and repent truly, God will forgive us and help us.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL

83. The first King of Israel, as you know, was Saul. He was a great warrior, and won many battles, and brought all the tribes of Israel to fight together for the first time since Joshua had led them. But though he formed and trained an army, that is not the greatest thing in making a nation. Saul made a fine general, but did not care much about anything else than war. Saul's first mistake was a serious one. The one thing that made the Israelites different in war from every other nation was the grand idea that all treasure should be given to God. After one battle against a very wicked nation, a nation probably having foul diseases brought on by their wickedness, every trace of which must be wiped out or it would spread amongst the Israelites, Saul spared the king Agag and the best of the cattle for himself. If he had been allowed to do this without any lesson that it was wrong, soon the whole army would have followed and done the same thing, and the nation sunk back to the level of other wicked nations. It was very easy for Samuel to see that Saul was not the desired king; and it was very easy for Samuel to prophesy that another would reign in his place. Who? Ah! cannot we imagine that Samuel knew of one, David, educated in his schools, perhaps

under his own eye. It did not take King Saul long to notice David's ability and be jealous of him. There was something certainly very selfish in Saul's bringing the king Agag home with him, as if to say, look whom I have captured. Samuel hewed the king in pieces before Saul's eyes. Samuel must have thought that indeed the nation was going down to the level of the other nations before he would do such a thing as that. Remember that God takes the wicked people into his future-life hospital, and that it was to prevent habits and wickedness being caught by the Israelites that the whole army of the enemy had to be destroyed.

84. The second King of Israel, as you know, was the great hero, David. There are three things about David that you ought to know. First and by far the most popular one, no doubt, with you, is that David was a hero. Even in boyhood he met and conquered before the whole army the great clumsy giant Goliath; clumsy indeed if you read the account of his heavy arms. He must have staggered along, and slight nimble David could have jumped from side to side and escaped his slow but terrible sword blows. Then when David had to leave Saul's court he lived a hero life in the woods with his faithful men. Like a Boy Scout he crept past the outposts one night, and crawled into Saul's very tent, and took his spear. He cut off a part of Saul's coat in the cave. He pretended to be mad when he was captured once. He certainly made a fine scout. He was every bit as good a general as Saul, and his men would do almost anything for him. It is not because he was a good general and scout that he is called by the Bible writer a man after God's own heart.

Secondly, David was a great sinner; he was a murderer, for he told his general, Joab, to place Uriah in a dangerous position, so that he would be killed, and so that David might marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. That was certainly not why David was a man after God's own heart. But David, with his great sins, always turned and asked God to forgive him. Many of the Psalms of David were written during these times of sorrow for his sins. Here indeed was a great lesson for the nation. See the King bowed down with grief over his sins. God's fifth great lesson taught to the hero and sinner, David, "God would rather have no sin, but once a sin is done, God wants a man to be really sorry for it." Or in other words, "The worst sin for ourselves is a sin which we are not sorry for." "Once get into the way of not being sorry for your sins and you grow worse and worse."

Thirdly, David as a King looked to God always and tried to rule, not as he himself would like to rule, but as God would like him to rule. That is why, I think, the Bible writers say that he was a man after God's own heart.

85. Solomon followed David as king. He was chiefly noted for his luxury and wealth and glory,—Solomon in all his glory, as we sometimes remember him. Although God gave him a wonderful gift of wisdom and judgment, he slowly grew wicked and became something like a bad Sultan of Turkey. The Bible tells us he had a great many wives, and they turned him to wickedness. He forgot the lesson that David learnt, "the worst sin for ourselves is a sin we are not sorry for."

86. The great good of Samuel's schools was seen in the reigns of David and Solomon. Education and writing and poetry were being learnt by many. In these reigns we have the beginning of those great poems which led to the compiling of the psalms and other great books of poetry found in the Bible. You should know something about poetry. There are three kinds of poetry. Heroic, relating the events of heroes. Lyrical, relating the sorrows and hopes of men or nations. Dramatic, relating events by making different characters speak as in a play. In your reading at school of poets, Milton wrote heroic poetry, Tennyson wrote lyrical poetry, Shakespeare wrote dramatic poetry. In the Bible the heroic poems are only fragments, such as the song of Deborah, in the Book of Judges, 5th chapter. Lyrical poetry is seen in the Psalms, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations of Jeremiah. Dramatic poetry in the Book of Job.

87. When you go to church, perhaps the happiest time you have there is when you are singing the hymns. You pick up your book and find the number, and you are glad the church has a hymn-book. Now I want to tell you that David started to make a hymn-book for the Israelites when he began to compose the psalms. David did not compose all the psalms or hymns, but it was always called the hymn-book of David, or the psalms of David. You remember the three divisions of time; the kings before the captivity, the times of the captivity, the times of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. Many psalms were written by David, some were written under the kings before the captivity, many during the captivity, and some during the restoration.

If you had thought before that the psalms were all written by David, being used to the Church of England prayer book or the Presbyterian psalm book, turn up the psalms in your Bible and see the headings over them. For instance, Psalms 73 to 83 are psalms of Asaph.

The Psalms were divided into five books, the last psalms in each book being 41, 72, 89, and 106 and 150. All these have almost the same endings: "Blessed be the Lord, amen and amen, praise ye the Lord." David probably composed Books I. and II., and many psalms in Book V.

88. There are a few interesting things which, perhaps, you would like to know about the Psalms. If you look carefully in your Bible you will find any amount of musical instructions. In fifty-five Psalms there may be found instructions to the chief musician. For instance, Psalm 4, "To the chief musician on Neginoth," which means on stringed instruments. There are about fifteen different instructions to the chief musician. The Psalms 120, and 122 to 134, are thought to be the great processional hymns that the choir sang as they went up into the Temple, on the occasion of the three great Jewish feasts.

The long Psalm, 119, is strangely divided into sections of eight verses each, every section and each line in it beginning with the Israelite or Hebrew letters of the alphabet. Verses one to eight in the first section have every line beginning with the Hebrew "A." Verses nine to sixteen in the second section, have every line beginning with the Hebrew "B." And so on right through the Hebrew alphabet.

89. Have you ever gone into a large cave, and called

out and heard the echo come back. Well, God called his Great Lessons out to the World, and in the Psalms has the echo of these come from the people of the world back to God. For in the Psalms the Israelites told God that they knew He punished the wicked and helped the good. Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the councils of the ungodly." "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." "The way of the ungodly shall perish." They told back to God, or echoed back, the second lesson that God is a good friend. Psalm 3: "I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me." We must do the same unto our neighbour. Psalm 28: "Save thine people and bless thine inheritance; feed them also and lift them up for ever." Repent truly and God will help, and the worst sin for myself is the sin I am not sorry for, is written on nearly every page of the Psalms.

Of the great temple at Jersualem not one stone was left upon another, but the wonderful hymns of the Jewish worship still continue the most wonderful and helpful songs of men to God. We now turn from the Psalms to another book of poetry.

90. Have you ever read in your school any of the plays of Shakespeare. Take Hamlet, for instance; you know Hamlet is divided up into acts and scenes, and has characters which speak. And there is a great question asked in "Hamlet," Is it better to live through trouble or kill yourself? "To be, or not to be, that is the question." "Hamlet" is called a drama. Now the Book of Job in the Bible is a drama. Not that Job never lived, but that around his life a drama was written. For the Book of Job can be divided up into acts and

scenes and characters, and it asks a great question, "Why is there so much trouble and sickness in the world?" When the Book of Job was written we cannot tell; some people think it was written in the time of Solomon. We will try and put it down in acts and scenes. It was never acted.

Act I., Scene 1.—Satan asks leave from God to see if Job will be righteous if he loses his wealth. God gives permission, but Job himself must not be touched.

Scene 2.—Job loses his wealth and his children, but blesses God.

Act II., Scene 1.—Satan again asks leave from God to afflict Job himself. God gives permission, but Job's life must not be taken.

Scene 2.—Job in the corner of his tent afflicted with boils. Three old friends come to see Job, and tell him he must have done some terrible secret sin, for the wicked never have wealth and health. Job says the wicked very often have wealth and health, and the good very often have poverty and sickness, and he has done no terrible secret wicked thing. Then a young man comes in, and tells them all that they do not know what they are talking about. "God sees your wicked sin, Job," says the young man, "and is whipping you in order to make you better."

Act III.—God Himself speaks to Job. These things are mysterious beyond your knowledge. Put your trust in Me, says God.

Act IV.—Job is restored to health and wealth.

91. In the first Book of Kings, the 4th chapter, and 32nd verse, we read that Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. Like

the hymn book of the Psalms of David, begun by David, and receiving many new additions, so the Book of the Proverbs, and the Books of the Song of Solomon, were probably begun by Solomon, and completed like the Psalms, as time went on. In fact, in the Book of Proverbs, you find the different headings of different men and composers, just as you found in the Psalms. Chapter 1, The Proverbs of Solomon, the Son of David, King of Israel. Chapter 25, These also are the Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out. Chapter 30, The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh. Chapter 31, The words of King Lemuel.

92. The Song of Solomon makes, indeed, a beautiful poem. There are three principal characters, a beautiful affectionate girl, a loving shepherd, and King Solomon. The loving shepherd and the beautiful affectionate girl, are in love with one another. King Solomon sees the beautiful girl, and takes her away to his palace, but she remains true to her shepherd lover, and goes back to him. That there are plenty of lessons to be gained from the Song of Solomon we know, because St. Bernard, founder of the St. Bernard breed of dogs in his monastery of the Alps, preached eighty-six sermons from it, and only reached the third chapter; and one of his monks continued the course, and only reached the sixth chapter before he died. Probably, the Song of Solomon is made up of the best of the Hebrew wedding songs, put together so as to show what true love is.

93. Another great Hebrew poem is Ecclesiastes. You can look on the black side of life, says this poem, on the worst side of life, yet the conclusion of the whole matter is this, "Fear God, and keep His commandments."

What is the chief thing to do in Life? To seek wisdom and pleasure? No. To seek business or political life? No. To seek wealth or moderation in all things? No. To seek to be cheerful in the present with a hope for the future? Yes. It is the gathered wisdom of the Hebrews since the time of Solomon on the great question, What is the chief thing to do in life?

94. Another great Hebrew poem, or rather collection of poems, is the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Each of the five chapters is a separate poem. Four of the five poems are arranged something like the 119th Psalm, each verse beginning with a letter in alphabetical order of the Hebrew alphabet.

95. Two of the books that are very often given to children to read in schools are Shakespeare's Poems and Bacon's Essays. A few English poems had been written before Shakespeare; a few essays on wisdom were probably written before Bacon; but Shakespeare is the King and model of English poetry; Bacon is the King and model of English wisdom. Well, David was the King and model of Hebrew poetry, Solomon was the King and model of Hebrew wisdom, and the Hebrew collections of their best poems and wisdom were gathered together under the names of David and Solomon.

96. So David and Solomon, scholars from the schools of Samuel, began the great Hebrew Literature. There is one more book that I want to tell you about. You know what a novel is, a story book written for grown-up people. When you get to the age that you want to read novels, don't read one without asking the opinion of your father or mother. Now the Bible, which has books of

poems and books of wisdom, has also a book which is very much like a novel, the Book of Ruth.

97. When the Judges were ruling Israel, Naomi with her husband and two sons, because of a famine, went from Bethlehem, their home, to live in a foreign country. There her husband and two sons, who had married young girls in that country, died. Ruth, one of the son's wives, determined to accompany Naomi when she resolved to go back to Jerusalem. Once there, Naomi was welcomed, and Ruth went out to obtain work in the fields. Into the field of Boaz she went to work, and Boaz was related to Naomi's husband. Boaz fell in love with Ruth, and told the reapers to leave plenty of food for her to gather up. There was a way in those days that a lone woman could call on her nearest relative to protect her. While he was asleep she was to lie at his feet. This Ruth did, and Boaz was quick in his love to tell her he would protect her, and also marry her. Boaz knew, however, that there was a nearer relative to Ruth and Naomi. Meeting him, as was the custom, at the city gate, the nearer relative, by taking off his shoe and giving it to Boaz before witnesses, gave Boaz the right of protection and inheritance.

98. That Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi really lived, we may well believe in the time of the Judges, and that it was written about the time of David is probable, for Ruth's descendants stop at David. It gives us pictures of simple religious loving lives, not too high for us to follow in our own family life, not too wonderful for us to follow in the common hardships of our life.

99. Skins of animals have been used for a great many things. Furs and deer-skins are used now for

dress, and skins have always been used more or less for dress. But skins well polished up were probably used from David's time onward to write upon. In Abraham's time, he would use clay bricks. Moses would use the papyrus plant of Egypt, or stones, and perhaps skins. But from Samuel's schools onward, skins would be used. The books were not bound like our books, but rolled on two big rollers, like a camera film the size of a rolling-pin. As you read the book, you would roll it gradually off one roller on to the other roller, and if you were polite when you had finished, you would roll it back, so that the next person would begin at the beginning.

100. So God's Great Lessons to His children in the world, given to them through all the years of Bible history, were first of all, God helps good people, but punishes bad people. Second, God is a great friend, Whom you can speak to, and Who speaks to you. Third, Act towards your neighbour as you would towards God. Fourth, If you have done evil, and you truly repent, God will forgive you and help you. Fifth, The worst sin for yourself is the sin you are not sorry for.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

101. I suppose when you are at school, you find it very hard learning history. Take for instance—the Kings of England,—when you leave school you only remember a few of them, say William the Conqueror, John and the Magna Charta, Henry VIII. and Wolsey, Elizabeth and the Armada. So it is not necessary for you to know all the kings of the two Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, but only a few important ones. These are the ones I want you to remember. (1) Ahab of Israel, because in his reign appeared the great prophet Elijah, who handed his mantle to Elisha. (2) Jeroboam II. of Israel, in whose reign lived the prophets Amos and Hosea. (3) Hezekiah of Judah, because Isaiah, the great prophet, lived in his reign. (4) Josiah of Judah, because in his reign, as also in Hezekiah's, a great part of the Bible was put together. (5) Then came the captivity, during which the great prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, preached and wrote. (6) Then the return to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. Two kings of Israel, Ahab and Jeroboam II.; two kings of Judah, Hezekiah and Josiah; the captivity, and the return to Jerusalem.

102. Ahab grew into a wicked king, being led on by his wicked wife Jezebel who, being the daughter of the King of Tyre, brought with her the horrible worship of Baal. The schools of the prophets, begun you will

remember by Samuel, had grown in numbers, but Jezebel brought her own prophets of Baal, and tried to kill all the prophets from the schools of Samuel. It needed strong men to fight against the horrible worship of Baal. Elijah and Elisha were then strong men, prophets of the Lord, who saved the nation from the worship of Baal. We must remember also, that all the other nations thought power and pleasure and riches were the best things to get; but the Israelite nation had been taught that holiness, a good righteous life, was the thing that God wanted. Where, indeed, would God's Great Lessons have gone that he gave to Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and David, if it had not been for these great prophets, Elijah and Elisha?

103. You will probably remember some of the wonderful things that Elijah and Elisha did. But right here, learn this again about the Bible when you are young, remember it when you grow up, that we do not believe the Great Lessons of God because of the wonderful things in the Bible; but we believe the wonderful things because of the Great Lessons of God in the Bible. Do not worry too much about these wonderful things. These wonderful things always remind me of my Geography book at school. I never worried about whether men measured the exact distances of every sea and island, especially those lands lying round the Poles, they put them in as best they could. So the writers writing the memoirs of Elijah and Elisha wrote them as best they could. I do not worry about whether they have everything exactly accurate. On inscriptions on ten different monuments of the Assyrians, there are ten different statements about ten different facts in the reigns of ten

different Bible kings. No monuments, however, can prove the wonderful things. That the Great Lessons of God were accompanied by wonderful doings is not very hard to believe.

104. Jereboam II. lived at the same time as the prophets Amos and Hosea, and perhaps Joel. Now there are four things about the prophets and their prophecies, that I want you to know. (1) You probably think it is hard to prophesy. Well, it is not so hard as you think. You see a little boy who has on his Sunday clothes going home after falling into a puddle of mud. You can easily point your finger at him and say, "You're going to get it when you get home." You are prophesying what he will get, when he gets home. If I see a drunken man, I say, "If you don't stop drinking you will come to ruin." The prophets of Israel said to their nation, "If you do not stop drinking, and seeking pleasure, and worshipping idols, you will come to ruin."

105. (2) The prophets spoke and wrote in visions or pictorial language. For instance, we would say, "There will be war, and the nation will be too weak in drink and pleasure, and will be conquered." Amos says, "The daughter of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; she lieth forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up." Again, "Behold, I raise up against you, O House of Israel, saith the Lord, the God of Hosts, a nation; and they shall afflict you."

106. (3) But the prophet's duty was not so much to foretell as to forthtell. He was the setter forth, or teller forth, of goodness and holiness. He was pointing to goodness all through the troublous times of the Kings

and the captivity. Did God give the prophets a higher lesson than He had given in previous times? Yes. Be righteous and do good, not because you feel compelled to be good, but because you want to be good.

107. (4) The prophets point on to a future when a great Prophet and King shall come and rule, which prophecy we know was fulfilled in Christ. We must not try to make every passage in the prophets point on to Christ, but there are a great number of passages that certainly proclaim the coming of the great King.

108. You must not think that because the prophets are put altogether at the back of the Old Testament, that they all lived and wrote together. This is only an arrangement to put all the prophets together, and the minor prophets are called such because they are shorter than the other four.

109. Amos, Hosea, and probably Joel, lived about the time of Jereboam II. Amos was a shepherd who, gaining inspiration like David in the fields of the country, came into the city and denounced the wicked life there. Hosea was a man whose wife became very, very wicked, and left him, and would not live with him yet he took her back to him after all her wickedness. Every one knew about it. Hosea believed that God called him through his trouble to be a prophet; so he prophesied that the Israelite nation was like his wife, very very wicked, but that God would take them back if they would only come to Him. Joel lived in a time when there was a plague of locusts. He tells the nation they deserve such a plague for their wickedness, but that in God's good time He would remove the plague.

110. Hezekiah's reign was noted for the life of the

great prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was a great politician as well as prophet, and, probably under his direction, Hezekiah made a great reformation and improvement in religion. I think you would find it very hard if you were to try to collect the best of a great preacher's sermons, and place them in a book, in the exact order in which they were preached. So I dare say the Israelites found it very hard to place Isaiah's sermons exactly in order, but that they got the best of them together we may feel sure. Some people think that from Chapter XL. to the end of the Book of Isaiah is a collection of sermons or prophecies, whose author's names had been forgotten, which were put at the end of the prophecies of the greatest of all the prophets, Isaiah.

111. We read in the Book of Proverbs, chapter 25, "These also are the Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out." So there was some work done in Hezekiah's reign to get our Bible together. Indeed, Isaiah, the prophet and statesman, was also a Court writer, for we read in the II. Book of Chronicles, the 26th chapter, "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz write."

112. The prophet Micah also lived in the time of Hezekiah, and was probably a peasant, while the greater prophet Isaiah is thought to have been cousin to the King. Micah, in his prophecies, lets us know that many documents and writings of our Bible were certainly in existence. So then the first group of prophets were the shepherd Amos, the sorrowful Hosea, the locust prophet Joel, the peasant Micah, headed by the royal courtier, statesman and prophet, Isaiah.

113. The reign of Josiah is noted, because in that reign also, there was a reformation. The nation had gone back to its old careless way of worshipping, and speaking loosely about God. You have often heard of, I have no doubt, and perhaps you have helped in, a collection to make repairs in your church. Well, Josiah made repairs in the Temple, and while making repairs a Book of the Law was found. This was probably some of the Documents which were afterwards gathered together in the Book of Deuteronomy. It had probably either been hidden there for security during the careless period, or had been lost during that period. It was also at this period that the second great prophet of Israel arose, Jeremiah. And with Jeremiah are generally associated the minor prophets, Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk. Jeremiah lived long enough to see the nation taken into captivity to Babylon. He was very likely the man who urged Josiah to make his reformation. Jeremiah himself tells us how he wrote his prophecies. In the 36th chapter he tells us he dictated his prophecies to a scribe, Baruch; that the King burnt this roll the next year; but that Jeremiah again dictated his prophecies to Baruch. Jeremiah's life can be gathered from his prophecies; and it was a very painful life; but yet through trials and tortures he still prophesied. At one time he despaired altogether, see chapter 20. He was done with prophesying, with the "word of the Lord." But the Word of the Lord, "was like fire in his bones," he *must* prophesy. So ended the third stage of the prophets of Israel. 1st Stage, Elijah and Elisha, beginning in the reign of Ahab. 2nd Stage, Isaiah with Hosea, Joel, Amos and Micah, in the reign of Hezekiah.

3rd Stage, Jeremiah with Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, in the reign of Josiah.

114. Away in Babylon, the Israelite nation is now in captivity. Are there any prophets to speak to them in their Captivity? Yes, Ezekiel was the great prophet of the Captivity. He comforts the captive nation, tells them they will be restored again, and in a series of visions describes the re-building of the Temple. Ezekiel was the great prophet of the Captivity.

115. Now we turn to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These books are not prophecies, but books of history like the Book of Kings. In these books we learn that Ezra was allowed to return to Palestine, and start work on the re-building of the Temple. During the Captivity, the scribes of the Israelites had spent much of their time in writing out the books of the Bible, such as we have now, from the old documents. Ezra is unsuccessful, but Nehemiah attempts the same thing and succeeds. During the erection of the Temple Ezra again appears and reads before all the people assembled the book he has collected from the old documents. This time in Jewish history is called the Restoration. During this time the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and probably Obadiah prophesied; and the Book of Esther was written, describing some events that happened to the Jews that still remained at Babylon.

116. Now just a few words about the Books of Daniel and Jonah. Some people think that Daniel is a sort of historical-story book, like, for instance, Henty's "With Wolfe in Canada." If you have read "With Wolfe in Canada," you will remember the hero, a boy, discovered and showed General Wolfe the path up the

heights of Quebec. Now if Daniel was only a story about the times of the Captivity, surely he, the hero, would have been the one to suggest the re-building of the Temple, and also would have been, as the hero, in the living fiery furnace with his three friends. No, you may very well believe that Daniel was a real person, a real hero, like Joseph, Joshua, David, and the other heroes, and a great prophet also.

117. The Book of Jonah probably is not written by Jonah, but is written by a later writer, and refers to an event in the life of Jonah. Jonah tries to escape from preaching in Nineveh, goes to sea, in a storm; the sailors, thinking he is the cause of the storm, throw him overboard; a great fish swallows him and throws him up on the shore. He preaches in Nineveh, the people repent, God does not destroy them; at which Jonah is angry, and he is rebuked by God. Now the whale swallowing Jonah has troubled a great many people. We may be perfectly sure that God could have made the whale swallow Jonah. Turn to the Book of Jeremiah, the 51st chapter and 34th verse. There we read, "Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out." Now we do not say Nebuchadnezzar must have swallowed the prophet Jeremiah. But we say, the prophet is telling of Nebuchadnezzar torturing him in an impressive and pictorial manner. So God will not be angry with you if you believe that the writer of the Book of Jonah is telling you in an impressive and pictorial manner, after the example of Jeremiah, that Jonah could not get away

from the command of God to go and preach at Nineveh. Indeed, part of the Book of Daniel may be written in this style also, especially the account of Nebuchadnezzar turning into a beast and eating hay.

118. Let us review now the writing of the Bible. First, in the Pre-historic age on tablets of clay up to Abraham. Second, the great Leader and Writer, Moses. Moses handed on to Joshua something more than just the leadership of the army. In Exodus, chapter 17, verse 14, Moses is told, after a battle, to write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. And in Joshua, chapter 8, verse 35, "There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation." Third, then there came Samuel's schools. Here, probably, the Lessons from the clay tablets, and the documents of Moses, were put together, with a few of the early battle songs. Fourth, the great beginning of the Psalms and Proverbs and poems under David and Solomon. Fifth, during the Captivity, a further writing out and collecting together of documents, under Ezekiel and Ezra. Sixth, after the return a long final gathering together of the documents and books, and a refusal to include certain other writings, which we call the Apocrypha, which may be found in large Bibles between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

119. How were these documents kept? 1st, in Abraham's family. 2nd, Moses delivered the writings to the Priests, the tribe of Levi, for safe keeping. Then during the Kings these documents were evidently kept in the Temple. Then, under Ezra and Nehemiah, there was formed a school of scribes or writers, who gradually

gathered together, edited, and placed in a finished form the Old Testament as we have it to-day.

120. So we now come to the end of the first part of God's message to the world, the end of the Old Testament. I hope you know a great deal more now about God's message to the world, God's Word to us, than you did before you began to read these chapters. But the greatest message from God we have still to hear about, when we come to the New Testament, and the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSPELS—I

121. Everybody that you know has a name. Some people have two or three names. John Smith has two names. John is the Christian or first name, Smith the surname. But sometimes a man is known better by his title. For instance, you probably do not happen to know of William Smith, but William the Conqueror you probably know something about, William being the first name and Conqueror being the title. So in the Gospels, John the Baptist had his first name John, and his title Baptist, because he went about baptising. So with the precious name of Jesus Christ, Jesus was the first name and Christ was the title, meaning God's Anointed, God's chosen, God's Messiah, Messiah being in the Hebrew language the same as Christ. So now you know that Christ means the anointed and chosen King sent down into the world by God; God's chosen and anointed King the title that was given to Jesus.

122. I suppose the most joyful time in your young lives, children, is Christmas time. Well, you probably know by this time that Santa Claus is the same sort of being as a fairy. Fairy stories and Santa Claus are good for little children, because in fairy stories little children grow to admire good deeds and to hate bad deeds; and Santa Claus is very useful in teaching little children

to be good for a present at Christmas time. But by this time you have grown out of all that sort of thing, and you yourself help to amuse the little children by telling them about fairies and Santa Claus. But you know also the real reason for Christmas Day is to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, and you know that Angels unlike fairies are real, though we cannot see them. Now I want to tell you that Jesus, or His disciples, left no mention of the day of the year in which Jesus was born. They had no birthday books in which children and grown-up people wrote their names then. Also it took a great many years, like the seed growing slowly but steadily, to make the civilized people of the world into Christians; therefore it was not until five hundred years after Jesus was born that men began to reckon the years from His birth. We now think that they made then a mistake of about four years, and really they got very close to it, considering they were inspired more by piety than by scientific accuracy. Indeed, the early members of the Church had placed it two or three years before the present date. You will remember Herod the Great killed all the little children when the wise men from the East told him about the King, Jesus. Now Herod the Great died, according to historians and documents of that time, four years before the year one, according to our present counting. Therefore, we say Jesus was born about the year five or six B.C. It seems strange to say this, but it fits in exactly with the Gospels and Roman History. The day of the year, December 25th, is just a day set apart as the Birthday of Jesus, for neither Jesus Himself, nor His disciples, tell us anything about the day on which He was born.

123. You will remember that wise men and shepherds came to see Jesus when they heard He was born. The Wise Men followed a star. The Shepherds saw a great light and Angels. I wonder if you like making maps at school, putting the rivers in like snakes, and the mountains like caterpillars. Well, the Wise Men were looking probably at a map they had made, but there were no rivers or mountains on their map, for it was a map of the stars of the sky. On their map the sky was divided into sections, each section for a different part of the world, and if anything strange happened in that section of the sky representing some country, then they believed something strange would happen in that country. Something strange we may suppose had happened in that part of the sky which represented Palestine, and God led them to Jesus through their study of the stars, and they were guided by a star to Jerusalem, and then to Bethlehem.

124. The Shepherds were led to Jesus by a Great light and Angels. We think this is very wonderful. So it is, very wonderful to us, but it is not wonderful to God. Have you ever seen a searchlight, one of those great lights that flashes for miles around? Well, if you shone a searchlight from the deck of a big ship on to a savage island it would be a wonderful thing to the savages, but it would not be a miracle for us, but just the ordinary thing. So God's light of Angels flashing on the shepherds is a wonderful miracle to us, but it is not such to the Angels. It is a wonderful thing for us, but it is very easy for God.

125. Sometimes it used to pain me when I thought of wicked Herod killing all the little baby boys, when

he heard all about the new King that had been born. But probably only those in Bethlehem were killed, and Bethlehem was a small town, so that the number of baby boys actually killed was probably only about twenty. But the little boy King, born in a manger and cradled in a stall, was saved; and worked as He grew up at the carpenter's trade. It was not a large or magnificent home that he had, but we may be sure that it was a good and happy home. We are told that he was obedient to his parents; and oh! what a lot there is in that, when we come to think of it. Those, indeed, who really learn to be obedient to their parents when young, generally find it easy to be obedient to God and duty when they are grown up. Can we not see Jesus also working in the carpenter's shop; there is the beam and the mote that He afterwards spoke of; there are the nails and wood, just such nails and beams of wood that afterwards were used on the Cross. I wonder what work you have to do, reader of this book, school work, factory work, office work; do it at any rate, as Jesus worked of old, for your parents, for your family, and for God.

126. Of the life of Jesus from His babyhood to the age of thirty we have only one glimpse, the journey up to the Temple of Jerusalem, when He was found asking hard questions of the Doctors of learning. The writing of the lives of great men has only become the usual thing within the last one hundred and fifty years. The only lives of the great men of the olden days of Greece and Rome were written by Plutarch, and until quite recently it was not usual to make mention of their boyhood. Very little, for instance, is known of the life of Shakespeare. The Gospels do not give us a complete life of

Jesus, but give us the great points in His life, and declare His teaching. In fact, the last verse of St. John's Gospel tells us, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the whole world itself, would not contain the books that should be written." So we hear very little about the childhood of Jesus.

127. Perhaps you would be interested to know whether Jesus had a Church, like you have, to go to; whether He had a Bible to read; and a clergyman. Well, Jesus as a boy certainly had a Church to go to, but in those old Jewish times they called the places of worship Synagogues, except the big one at Jerusalem which they called the Temple; just as now there are Churches and Cathedrals. Then Jesus also had a Bible to read, and His Bible was the Old Testament. It was often read to Him in His happy home, and He studied it very often. His clergyman was called a Rabbi.

128. We will imagine now that Jesus is going to Church. He takes His seat in the back row with the other boys behind the seats of the chief worshippers. Do they start with a hymn or prayer? Probably with one or the other, as you will remember the Jewish hymn-book is the Psalms of David. Lessons were read from the Bible, the Old Testament, which was divided up into three parts; the Law up to the Book of Joshua; the Prophets which included most of the prophets and Joshua, Samuel and Kings; and the Poetical Books. Then there were sermons also. That Jesus must have paid very great attention at the Services we may feel sure. I think as He sat there in the Synagogue Service He must have felt that He would like to be able Himself to

teach people, and help them to a greater knowledge of God, and show them how to live a good life.

129. Boys may be divided into two classes; a great many who don't very much care what they are going to be when they grow up; and a few who have made up their minds to be something, a doctor or engineer, or something else like that.

Boys get all sorts of ideas about what they would like to be. As a boy, I wanted to be a coal-cart driver; I suppose if I were a boy now I would want to be a motorman on a street-car. But there are a few boys who, when they are quite young, make up their minds they are going to be doctors and cure patients, engineers and build bridges, clergymen and help others to live good lives, and go on ever growing in earnestness to be such. It is these boys who aim high when they are young, and stick to their aim, that God guides to great achievements for others. We may easily believe then that Jesus, when a boy, aimed high and wished to be of some great help to others in teaching them and showing them how to live a good life. That another boy of the same time, and in the same land, was also aiming high we know by the life of John the Baptist. A cousin of Jesus, we can hardly doubt but that the two had often spoken of their aims and belief.

130. During the eighteen years in which Jesus worked in the carpenter's shop till he reached the age of thirty we may easily believe He had His mind made up to do some great good to His fellow beings. Knowing His Bible, the Old Testament, He dwelt, as many did around Him, on the promise which the Prophets had given of a King to come, a true servant of God.

His cousin, John the Baptist, a strenuous, determined boy and man, might have aided Jesus into the belief that He, Jesus, was the promised king. His mother, also, would help Him in that belief in her own mother's loving way. At any rate, John the Baptist was convinced that the King was Jesus, and the Kingdom of God was coming really through Him. Jesus was baptised by John, and they saw a sign from Heaven, and heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved son in Whom I am well pleased."

131. Therefore, Jesus believed Himself to be the promised King, the Messiah whom the Jews expected. There was need, He thought, however, for great preparation, and so Jesus went out into the Wilderness for forty days. The Bible tells us He was fasting, meaning perhaps He fed Himself upon the roots to be found there. But was He only fasting and doing nothing else? I think He was very busy at something else. He was probably forming up in His mind the rules of His Kingdom, or as we older people would put it, the principles of His form of righteousness. These He afterwards gave when He preached the Sermon on the Mount, and enlarged on them in His individual talks, and illustrated them by His parables. Out there in the desert, then, we see Him studying how in the plainest and best language He may give His ideas to the people of the world. A man getting rich is tempted to be mean and selfish. A man making a success is tempted toward a selfish pride. A man starting a good movement is tempted to accomplish it hastily by lower means. Rich, successful, good men are all tempted to lowness

of character, just as poor, unsuccessful, and unambitious people are tempted, every man according to his life.

132. So Jesus was tempted as He sat in the Wilderness making out His rules of righteousness. Do you think the Devil came to Him with his horns, and his tail, and his cloven hoof? Do you think that was the way the temptation came to Him? No, I feel sure that was not the way of it, for He was tempted just as we are. Supposing you were in the house all alone, and you were tempted to steal some jam, or money out of your mother's purse. Does the Devil come to you with horns, and tail, and cloven hoof? No, I should think not; why, he would scare you so, that you would be afraid to do anything wrong. Learn this and never be afraid in the dark, the Devil will never appear to you with horns, and tail, and cloven hoof. But temptation will come to you by suggestion. So as Jesus sat in the wilderness of old, looking at those curious white stones to be found in Palestine, which travellers assure us look just like the little white bread cakes of the Jews, the temptation came to Him,—turn these into bread, if you are the Messiah you can do it. "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

133. Then, too, if you are going to school one morning the temptation may come to you to go out into the fields to pick flowers, or to the brooks to swim, or to the river to fish, instead of going to school. Let me describe that to you in Scriptural language: "And the devil taketh you unto an high mountain and showeth you the pleasant meadows, the running brooks, and the glassy rivers all in a moment of time, and saith, all

this will I give you if you will begin to worship me by doing wrong." Just as in the wilderness of old Jesus was taken in imagination to see all the kingdoms of the world given to Him as king, if He would only bow down to go about His great work in the wrong way.

134. There is always a right way and a wrong way of doing a thing. For instance, you have to pass an examination. The right way is to study well and pass it. The wrong way is to cheat. Now Jesus had before Him the founding of His laws of righteousness and the Kingdom of Heaven. He was tempted to begin His Kingdom in the wrong way. Throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the Temple was the suggestion. Come sailing down from there unhurt, and people will worship you as an angel or a god. That would have been the wrong way, because God wants us to know Him and think of Him, not as a God of Miracles, but as the God of Goodness and Love. Supposing you are a boy, and there are some boys at a boarding-school who are learning the bad habit, for boys, of smoking. You make up your mind to stop them of the habit. One night you rub sulphur from matches on your hands and then go through the dormitories in the dark, rubbing your hands together, thus making small flames of fire. Then you tell the boys (who do not know how you did it) that you know if they are not careful and stop smoking they will have flames like those inside of them; —it might frighten a few for a little while; but the *desire* to smoke would still be there. On the other hand if you pointed out to one or two first of all that if they stopped and helped you to break the others of the habit, (for the little boys will soon follow smoking, you

would say, and for the sake of others as well as for themselves, as for them after all, smoking is only pretending to be a man), there would more likely be a change from smoking;—that is to say, if you went at it quietly, putting forward the serving and helping of others as well as self, instead of going at it quickly, not caring for the reason why they should change.

135. It is the reason why we are good that matters, or as we older people would say, it is the motive or the spirit in which a thing is done. Jesus, out there in the wilderness, chose the quiet method of goodness and love, beginning with a few, even twelve, in the serving and helping of others, though He was often tempted to begin the wrong way suddenly, with a great number by force and wonderment; "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord."

136. Learn this much then about temptation. (1) In this world you will be tempted. (2) Temptation is not sin. You may be tempted to steal money, that is temptation; but it is sin when you take it. (3) Not to take the money, and yet still to wish to take it is a first step towards Heaven and happiness here, but it is only a first step. (4) To grow so that you do not even desire to take the money is to really conquer the temptation, and is a real taste of Heaven and happiness, and is religion according to the rules of righteousness laid down by Jesus. (5) God grant you may never grow in any sin, so that, although you desire to give it up, you do not seem to be able to; for that is a taste of Hell; and only the constant serving of God in the helping of others will save you from destruction.

137. Was God giving Jesus then a higher lesson

to give to the world than He had given in Old Testament times? Yes, indeed, a much higher and grander message and lesson. What was it? Ah! Jesus was to be a living and perfect example of a perfect person. He was to teach us the absolute rules of righteousness.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPELS—II

138. The Rules of Righteousness are given to us pretty clearly by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and made plainer, if possible, by His teaching on different occasions, and illustrated for us in His parables. The Sermon on the Mount may be found in St. Matthew's Gospel in chapters 5, 6, and 7. Some think that St. Matthew has here gathered together in a group the most important of the Rules of Righteousness, and that Jesus did not preach the Sermon all at once. Others think that Jesus preached a great deal more in His first sermon than what is written in St. Matthew as the Sermon on the Mount, and that St. Matthew has only written down the most important matters. Be that as it may, the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by St. Matthew is not only the greatest sermon ever preached, but it puts forward the very highest rules that we could possibly follow in our lives.

139. There are three rules of righteousness that I wish every boy and girl would learn from the Sermon on the Mount and the life and teaching of Jesus, so that when they grow up they would make people around them happy and peaceful. 1. Self-sacrifice. What is self-sacrifice? Well, supposing you were a great athlete and leader in your school. You are captain of your football team. When the first match is played you

decided not to play, but put a weaker player on the team, would that be self-sacrifice? No, that would be shirking your duty. But supposing a boy got hurt and someone had to take him home after the game and miss the supper provided for the two teams, and you offered yourself as the one to take him, would that be self-sacrifice? Yes. If you went to college and did not strive to come head of your year when it was possible you might do so, would that be self-sacrifice? No, again it would be shirking your duty. If, however, there were prizes of money offered, and you knew there were many students who needed the money, and, although you knew you had a good chance to take the prize, you refused to try for it, because you had plenty of money, would that be self-sacrifice? Yes. Again, when out in the world seeking your own livelihood should you desire to be a great politician, or a great merchant, or a great doctor, judge or bishop? Why, yes, because, if all the good men refused to take these positions, they would be shirking their duties, and the scamps and scoundrels would take them. But all through your life wherever it is placed, if you begin with the weaker boys at school and the poor students at college, you will find plenty of opportunity to practise self-sacrifice according to the Rules of Righteousness laid down by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

140. Jesus Himself did not give up the title of King and the power of a king, and allow some poor man to take His title and power, but He used His power and position and office for the good of others. Whether you in the future will dig drains or rule an empire you will have a circle in which to practice the

acts of self-sacrifice that you should begin to learn at school. In the same way God does not give up the whole treasures and wealth of Heaven for anyone to use as they will; if you have money and wealth, and throw it out on to the streets, scoundrels and scamps will be there to pick it up. You are to use your wealth and ability for God, as near as you can to a godlike way. In the life of Jesus, every day we may suppose there were many little acts of self-sacrifice, like the washing of the disciples feet; His whole life was a life of sacrifice if we believe He gave up the glories and residence in Heaven to dwell with men in the world; and He performed a great act of self-sacrifice when He died rather than give up his teaching. So in your life, every day there should be many little acts of self-sacrifice; your life should be one great life of humility no matter what high position you may reach, and there may be two or three occasions when you can perform a great act of self-sacrifice,—perhaps one occasion when you may die to save others.

141. The second rule. Turning the other cheek means never being revengeful, always forgiving. But being always forgiving does not mean that there should be no punishment. It is true that Jesus said that we should forgive our brother seventy times seven times, but we may forgive him and yet we may have to punish him. If your small brother began to steal things from you, you might forgive him and not punish him, but, if he took advantage of your forgiveness and stole all the more, it would be necessary to have him punished, so that he would not grow up a thief. But you would have him punished and yet feel sorry for him and for-

give him and hold no revengeful thoughts. The highest stage of this rule is, as Jesus has told us, "love your enemies."

142. The third rule is a different one from the other two. It has not so much connection with what you do as with what you think. Mind your thoughts. Keep them pure and good. I used to think when I was a boy that after I had said my prayers at night until I said them in the morning I might not think at all, for God would be displeased. I now know that if a boy would make that rule and keep it he would be the better boy for it. It is not one of the rules of Jesus, but it would help you to keep that rule of Jesus which tells you to be pure in word and thought and deed. And oh! you will find it harder and harder as you grow up to keep this rule.

143. So these are the rules in the Christian life, self-sacrifice and humility, no revengeful but rather forgiving thoughts, as few bad and impure thoughts as possible. Jesus taught these in the Sermon on the Mount, showed how they were to be followed in His life, repeated them in His teaching, illustrated them in His parables.

144. You know that when you show a book to your little brother or to some little child the thing he understands most about it is the pictures. His simple unlearned mind can understand the pictures when the reading and the words are too hard for him. So, in the teaching of Jesus, some of the words and ideas are hard for simple minds, but the parables are like pictures, they illustrate the teaching of Jesus.

145. Jesus teaches in His parables these three things: (1) The Jewish church must change into the

Kingdom of God. The Jews were given a great work to do in the world, like labourers in a vineyard. Every now and then, God, the owner of the vineyard, had sent his servants, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and they had been treated badly. Now, in the person of Jesus, God sent His Son, and they would not listen to Him but would kill Him.

146. (2) The Kingdom of God would come slowly but surely. Like the seed in the ground which in time grows up into a tree, or the leaven which leavens after a while the whole lump, so we can see that Jesus taught that the Jewish nation's great men had been servants of God, and had delivered God's messages and lessons, but that the Jews had treated them badly, and so God was going to cast them out from being his chosen race; a Kingdom of Heaven was to be set up on earth by Jesus, which would grow slowly, but surely, in numbers and in goodness.

147. (3) God is calling you into His Kingdom. His call is like the sower scattering his seed. Is your life like a path through a field where all sorts of evil thoughts are passng? Is it like a rock, hard and selfish, so that no beautiful and unselfish actions ever grow there? Are all good intentions choked by pleasure and laziness like thorns choke seeds? Or do you frequently do unselfish and kind actions—such growing in your life like corn in a good field? Has God given you great ability, moderate ability, or small ability? You do not know till you try. Great ability or ten talents, moderate ability or five talents, small ability or one talent, whatever you have in the Kingdom, God wants you to use it well for Him. The good Samaritan was unselfish, went out of his way to be kind. The

Publican when he prayed acknowledged himself a sinner unlike the Pharisee who thought he was a very good man. The rich fool thought only of his riches and prosperity, and in the middle of it all he died and lost them all, and had nothing to help himself with in the next world. The five foolish virgins were without oil for their lamps at the marriage, and were shut out from the pleasure which the five wise virgins enjoyed. Just as the foolish people who refuse to supply themselves with an unselfish Christian life will find themselves shut out from the pleasures which the wise unselfish Christian people enjoy. The rich selfish man suffers agony in comparison with Lazarus, the poor beggar. But God will not forsake anyone; like the sheep that was lost, or the piece of silver that was lost, or the prodigal son, who left his home to be very wicked, sinners always have God seeking them. There is one thing though, which I want you never to think, that is, that, like the prodigal son, a man may be as wicked as he likes, and then in the end ask God to forgive him, and he will be treated best of all in Heaven, like the prodigal son in the parable. Remember, only on the first day of the prodigal's return was the fatted calf killed, and the ring given him, and music and dancing enjoyed. That did not happen every day afterwards also. I see the prodigal for years after his return going about his father's estates with his head bowed in deep sorrow for what he had done,—a miserable, miserable life for many years. Some day in the far off future the good will be divided from the bad like the fisherman keeps the good fish and throws away the bad ones.

148. The merchant sold all he had so that he could

buy the pearl of great price; the labourer found a treasure, he sold all he had that he might buy it; so unselfish Christian character is the pearl and treasure of great price. Perhaps you may say, I wish someone would tell me where I could find this pearl of great price now, while I am young. Well, I can tell you a good way in which you can set about it. I have before me on my desk here a book which is called Æsop's Fables; I dare say you have read it. Whenever we older people think of fables we always think of Æsop, and whenever we think of parables, (which are as different and as much more true to rules of righteousness as your ruler in school is truer than distances you could guess), we think of Jesus. But I notice after every fable in Æsop's book there is a sentence giving the meaning of the fable. Now supposing you were to write out in a little exercise book each parable as you find it in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke (there are none in St. John's Gospel), and give in a sentence at the end of it the meaning of the parable in your own words as well as possible. Thus you will learn while young to study the Bible in its most interesting parts; and to love the teaching of Jesus.

149. I would like to tell you a few things now about the wonderful things Jesus did, which we call miracles, such as curing the blind, dividing a few loaves and fishes among many people and raising the dead. One of the badges which a boy scout may win is,—first aid to the injured. Among the many things he will have to learn for this is the reviving of an apparently drowned person. He puts him on his stomach, face on side with tongue out, and presses the small of his back down

towards his hip, in regular motions about every five seconds until the man begins to breathe again. Now if a boy scout was wrecked in a foreign land where they knew nothing about such a method, and he revived a drowning person, they would then think it a miracle. And so it would be a miracle to them, but no miracle to the boy scout. So if you look at the miracles of Jesus in this way, you will understand that when Jesus raised Lazarus and the widow of Nain's son, it was no miracle to God or the Angels, or to Jesus, because they knew how it was done, but it is a miracle to us and to all people for we do not know how it was done.

150. In the same way it would be very easy for a father who was making waves for his son in a bath to cease making waves and quiet the water at the word of the son. For, indeed, the sea Gennesaret, on which Jesus was when the great storm came, was just like a small bath to God. And could, you may ask, a father make his son walk on the water, for Jesus walked on the water? Why, yes, if the father held his son up by the hands until his feet just touched the water. So God held Jesus up so that His feet just touched the water.

151. Have you ever, when in school, thought how wonderful it is when your teacher from his head can fill all the scholars' heads with thoughts. When the great ship Titanic went down two small words from the Captain, "Be British," filled and fed all those people with courage. Five musical instruments well played will fill and feed thousands with music. A few seeds put in the ground will grow up and feed thousands. Jesus did with the loaves and fishes, what musicians can

do with music, men with words,—because he was Jesus and knew His power over what we call nature, as a man knows his power over music and words.

152. He also knew his power over disease, and cured many of their ailments. Sometimes people are apt to say that Jesus made a mistake in calling certain diseases "Evil Spirits." He should have called them "insanity" they say. Evil spirits or insanity have never been explained, and were not explained, but cured by Jesus. You do not explain anything by calling it by a bigger word. You do not explain, much less put out, a fire by calling it a conflagration.

153. You know that if a little child trips and tumbles forward, and loses its balance, it will surely fall to the ground. That is what we older people call the Law of Gravitation. But supposing you were to catch the child, the power of gravitation is still there for you feel the weight of the child on your arm, but your personal power in this case is greater and higher than the power of gravitation. So the personal power of Jesus was greater than the power of disease or death, and as we older people say, Nature.

154. Have you ever studied chemistry? Well, in learning chemistry you do not think that your teacher is very much greater than you are in chemistry because of the experiments he can perform, such as bending glass, turning white water into blue, &c. But you think he is very much greater than you are because of his knowledge of chemistry. So we do not think that Jesus is very much greater than we are in righteousness, so much because of the miracles, but far rather because of his Knowledge of Righteousness. Like the experi-

ments in chemistry, the miracles help us in learning the Knowledge of Righteousness.

155. Except in St. John's Gospel Jesus does not call Himself the Son of God, but when He is called such He never denies it, but shows often that He approves of the title. If you read the Gospels you will find that over eighteen times He is called the Son of God, and never attempts to correct anyone for calling him such. In St. John's Gospel some wonderful statements of Jesus show that He knew Himself as the Son of God. "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son." "Dost thou believe in the Son of God? Then hast thou seen Him and He it is which speaketh with thee." "Before Abraham was I am." "For thou lovest me before the foundation of the world."

156. We also are children of God. But we have not lived for ever and ever before with God, though we hope to live for ever and ever with Him in Heaven after we die. But Jesus has lived always with God. He came down on the earth for a little while, a good many years ago, to live like you and I live now. This is called by what is probably a big and strange word to you—Incarnation. Carnal is a word which comes in the Bible, and means "flesh." So instead of saying "Incarnation," say "In flesh," and you have it. So Jesus taught, and his disciples after Him, that Jesus was the Son of God Who had lived for ever and ever with God, and Who had come "in the flesh" to earth to show us how God would have us live.

CHAPTER X

THE GOSPELS—III

157. You will remember the Jewish prophets had prophesied that a great King, the Messiah, would come. Well, the Jews, after the prophets died got some very grand notions about this King, and began to hope that He would lead them out in battle and conquer all the other nations and make these other nations slaves. So when Jesus, the Messiah, did come, they did not know Him, and were so angry because He did not have their grand notions that, as you know, they killed Him. They were so proud of their nation, they could not understand His teaching, which was for all nations.

158. So Jesus died on the cross in the midst of two criminals. Sometimes we read that the people of the world were saved by the death of Jesus, by His precious blood, but all this just means that the world was saved by Jesus. When we say after a great war that our country was saved by the death of our soldiers, by the shedding of their blood, we know just the same that it was by their life and strength that the country was saved. So it is not so much by the death or blood of Jesus that we are saved (which is another way of expressing it) as by His life and strength.

159. Try to imagine what the world would be like if Jesus had not lived and taught. The world would

be in a very wicked state. He saved the people of the world from great wickedness and pointed to great holiness. The more you try to act like Jesus the holier you become, and so in one way, at any rate, Jesus saves you from many of your sins, and me from many of my sins.

160. This is very easy for you and me to see, and the next step is almost just as easy for us to see. Jesus believed God gave Him this work to do. So we say, and are easily able to believe, that God sent Jesus into the world to save the world, and He has saved the world, not so much by His death, or blood, as by His life and strength.

161. Now we come to something harder to understand. People had always believed in all countries of the world that some sacrifice was necessary for the wickedness of the world, and Jesus and the Apostles tell us that Jesus Himself was that sacrifice. Now the sacrifice could not have been His human death alone; nor could the sacrifice have been by His sufferings, for the nails of the cross were not harsher than the sufferings of the martyrs, or sufferings of a life-long invalid. Besides in the Gospels there is no word that Jesus suffered a harder death than anyone else could possibly suffer, nor any word that Jesus suffered greater agony under the nails of the cross than anyone else will ever suffer. So the sacrifice was not one of human death alone or suffering. But we must remember that Jesus sacrificed the Glories of Heaven to come down on earth, live as a man, and suffer untold agony in the Garden of Gethsemane as He thought of the sins of the whole world.

162. But the Apostles and religious people have always thought and felt that in the death of Jesus there was a great mystery, and in some mysterious way Jesus offered Himself there especially as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. God alone will be able to explain the mystery to us; meanwhile we say, it is one of those things which God has not explained.

163. This is called the Atonement;—split that word up into At-one-ment. You know what we mean when we say people are "at one" with each other, they have been brought together again. Wickedness had separated the people of the world from God; Jesus by making people holier brought them nearer to God, made God and the people of the world "at one" with each other, so it is called the Atonement.

164. So now you know two big words which people use when they speak about the life and work of Jesus; in the last chapter Incarnation, meaning the Son of God living "in flesh" on the earth, and in this chapter Atonement, the making "at one" of God and the people of the world. We talk about a boy's schooling and his education. Sometimes schooling means his school days and education his finished work, but schooling and education mean really the same thing. So sometimes Incarnation (the coming "in flesh" of the Son of God) has meant the birth of Jesus, and Atonement (the making "at one" of God and the people of the world) has meant the death of Jesus, but really Incarnation and Atonement mean the same thing; the coming of the Son of God, known in the world of men as Jesus, and the saving and bringing closer to God of the sinful people of the world.

165. As you know, and have often been told, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after He died on the Cross. This is called the Resurrection. During the French Revolution some people wanted to have a new religion, better as they thought than Christianity, the religion of Jesus. A great statesman told them, with a laugh, that all they would have to do would be for one of them to die, announce that he would rise again on the third day, and then really do so, and the new religion would be made. If you could do that you also could begin a new religion. But no one has done it except Jesus. And the greater part of the early energetic teaching and working of the Apostles came just after they had seen Jesus risen from the dead.

166. When we say that Jesus rose again on the third day we must remember that in the old days the Romans counted the days at both ends of the calculation. Jesus died on the Friday and rose again on the Sunday, on the second day after Friday as we would say. But the Roman way would be Friday one day, Saturday the second day, Sunday the third day, counting in the days at both ends of the calculation.

167. The Jews had always worshipped on a Saturday, on the seventh day of the week, and they do so now. Why then was the day for Christians to worship changed to Sunday. There is no other reason except that Jesus rose on that day and so the Apostles changed the day of public worship to the first day of the week. When you begin to wonder sometimes how Jesus rose from the dead remember that there is no other explanation for the changing of the day of worship from the seventh to the first, from Saturday to Sunday, except

that Jesus rose from the dead on that day, and that the Apostles changed the day of worship in commemoration of His rising from the dead.

168. I used to wonder if, as Jesus had His wound prints in His hands and feet and side, a man who had been wounded would have his wounds in the next world, and how God would gather together the fragments of a man who was blown to pieces by dynamite, and how it was that our dead people do not leave an empty tomb like Jesus did. But I grew to know that Jesus showed the wounds and left the empty tomb in order thoroughly to convince the Apostles who had not understood Him when He told them He would rise again; and that a man blown up into small pieces by dynamite (like every other person) does not take this body he has in the world with him to the next world, but is given a new glorified body there, just as a child changes from working clothes into party clothes. You may tear up the working clothes, if a child has no more use for them, or you may lay them away to rest.

169. Then shortly after Jesus rose from the dead, whilst in the midst of the disciples, He ascended up to Heaven. Now you ought not to imagine that Jesus ascended growing smaller and smaller to their sight until He became a dot in the sky to their eyes, for we are told that a cloud received Him out of their sight. And Heaven is not so much a distance up in the air as a feeling of happiness and holiness. Heaven is not so much a position up in the sky or anywhere else as it is a feeling of happiness and holiness near God and Jesus. You may go up as high as the tower of Babel, but you will be no nearer God; but if you take some sick friend

flowers or toys you will be nearer God and feel very happy and holy.

170. Did Jesus tell us anything further about God than Moses and the Prophets? Yes. Moses and the Prophets told us God is a King; Jesus, that God is also a Father. Jesus also taught that besides God living for ever and ever, and Himself living for ever and ever, a Third Person whom He called the Holy Spirit, or the Comforter, sometimes called the Holy Ghost, had lived for ever and ever. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have all lived together for ever and ever. The Heavenly life that They live is different from our life. Jesus told us that though They were three Persons, yet They were so closely joined, you might say They were One. That is why we sometimes say, "Three in One and One in Three." They all Three together created the world. They all Three saved the world. They are all Three guiding the world. We speak of Them as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

171. I dare say you would be very puzzled if you read the first chapter of St. John's Gospel where we read: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But it would be simpler to understand if you read it this way: "In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God." For that is what it means. St. John took an expression, "The Word," which had been used in his day, and everybody knew meant the method by which God had created the world; the Jews had said by Wisdom, the Greeks by mere power, but they used as the expression of all these "The Word." Just as

you might say that you passed your examination by hard work, or by cleverness, but you could use the expression "by study," to cover it all. St. John says, as it were, "The Word" is not mere power, or the Wisdom of God, but it is Jesus. Therefore, that you may understand whom Jesus is, in the beginning of my Gospel, I will call Him by your well-known expression, "The Word."

172. I suppose you have often played "Hide the Thimble," and know how you get hotter and hotter as you get nearer the thimble. Well, it may astonish you to know that a great many of the wisest men in the world are continually playing that game. Not at children's parties, or with a thimble; but searching in the Bible, and in Bible times, to find who wrote the Gospels; for though it was always believed that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, wrote the Gospels, it is only during the last hundred years or so, that wise scholars have searched for the writers, as the titles placed above the Gospels in our Bibles now were no part of the Gospels. Let us follow one of these wise scholars. He is going into the Bible and Bible times, to find the writer of St. John's Gospel, whose name is hidden there somewhere.

173. First of all he finds out that the writer of St. John's Gospel must have been a Jew, Jewish feasts, Jewish customs, Jewish ideas, are all very familiar to him. More than this, he is a Jew of Palestine, and lived in the time of Jesus; for he knows the exact distance between Bethany and Jerusalem, the exact position of Sychar, knows about little jealousies, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth," and that the Temple was forty-six years in building, all of which we find in other

books of the same time. The writer was also an eye-witness, as may be known by reading verse 35, chapter xix., and verse 24 in chapter xxi. One step further, who is in this Gospel, "the disciple whom Jesus loved"? Why is the name of the disciple John never mentioned in this Gospel? "The disciple whom Jesus loved" claims to be the writer of the Gospel. Now Jesus had three disciples whom He took with Him on special occasions, Peter, James and John. Now we are getting nearer the author of this Gospel. James was killed early in his life, according to the Acts of the Apostles; Peter is named as running to the tomb with "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It was not therefore James or Peter; therefore it must have been John.

174. Going outside the Bible into Bible times we find one hundred years after St. John died that there were four Gospels, John, Luke, Matthew, and Mark, read in Church, and recognised as coming from the Apostles, and this is told us by a student of a teacher, who himself studied under St. John. Many people attempted to write gospels, but only our four were recognised as coming from the Apostles, one great member of the early Church, writing about sixty years after St. John died, saying, "four Gospels handed down to us." Not only at this time were the four Gospels read in all the Churches, but they had been translated into different languages, as a great lawyer in Africa, living at this time, tells us. A fragment of writing that comes down to us from this age says among other things, "the fourth Gospel is the work of John, one of the disciples."

175. The Gospels were not written until some time after the death of Jesus. Jesus Himself never wrote

anything, except when He stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground on the dust of the temple court. He never commanded His disciples to write a word. He told them to preach, to go forth and preach to all nations, but never a word so far as we can gather about a written Gospel. Perhaps you might wonder if they could remember the words of Jesus well enough to write them down afterwards. Well, the memory of the Eastern people is very extraordinary, and they would be constantly preaching them and talking them over amongst themselves. The Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, are thought to have been written within forty years after the death of Jesus, because about that time took place the seige of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and the writers, had they been writing later, would have mentioned the destruction of Jerusalem. The Gospel of St. John was probably written about twenty or thirty years later, and was meant to fill in some of the lessons the others had left out.

176. St. Matthew is thought to have possibly written first a little work called "The sayings of Jesus," and afterwards to have written his Gospel from that work, and with the Gospel of St. Mark before him. The "Sayings of Jesus" have been lost, but most of that work is found in St. Matthew and St. Luke. Matthew was the Apostle whom Jesus called from the receipt of customs.

177. St. Mark's Gospel is thought to have been dictated to him by St. Peter. The twelfth chapter and twelfth verse of the Acts of the Apostles tells us Peter came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark. And St. Peter in one of his epistles,

calls St. Mark by the affectionate name of "my son." Also a prominent member of the early Church tells us, "Mark was Peter's interpreter." St. Mark's Gospel then is thought to have been the first.

178. St. Luke opens his Gospel by telling us there were many other accounts of the life of Jesus, and that he is going to write one also. Probably St. Mark and the "Sayings of Jesus" by St. Matthew were amongst these, and the others (for there were probably many who had seen and heard Jesus) have been lost or were mere fragments. St. Luke was the companion of St. Paul in his journeys, and wrote the Acts of the Apostles also.

179. St. John gave lectures and sermons at Ephesus, late in his life, on Jesus and His teaching. Long after the other Gospels were well known, about twenty or thirty years after they were written, St. John at Ephesus, was asked by his friends to write his Gospel. St. John's Gospel evidently takes for granted that the life of Jesus as written in St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, is well known, and he is content to fill in. Being the nearest and dearest to Jesus, he gives us the highest teaching of Jesus.

180. We will suppose you wanted to get a good account of your last school closing. Matthew Perkins, a boy in the top class, writes down some notes. Peter Simpson, a boy also in the top form, dictates his ideas of the closing to Henry Mark. Matthew Perkins then writes his account, using Henry Mark's account and his own notes. Therefore you have now accounts written by Matthew and Mark. But Kenneth Luke, a boy who was not at the closing, writes an account, getting notes from Matthew and using Mark's account, and any

other accounts he can find. Now you have three accounts, all more or less the same, yet different. Then John Fairbanks, the head boy of the school, is asked to write his account, and he fills in what the others have left out. So you have the four accounts of your school closing, like the four Gospels of the Life of Jesus.

181. Of course, it will not astonish you to know that the original copies actually written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, have long been lost, because with so many copies and translations and the putting together into one written or printed book the whole Bible, the newest and cleanest copies would be sought. Would you like to know what is the oldest copy in existence of the Gospels? A writer six hundred years ago says that a man named Tatian, who lived about one hundred years after St. John died, wrote the four Gospels out in one long story, and that this one long story was written about by a man named Ephraem, living three hundred years after St. John died. This book of Ephraem's is the oldest copy of the four Gospels. So we say the oldest copy of the four Gospels that we can see to-day, was written just about three hundred years after St. John wrote his Gospel. And the oldest copies of the whole Bible were written about the same time, three tremendous old musty volumes, one in London, one in Rome, and one in Russia.

182. The first copies, indeed, were not written as books, but slowly by hand for the different churches, and the churches must often have lost them during persecution. We are delighted then to find in the early writers of the Church just after the Apostles died quotations from the Gospels covering every important

occurrence or teaching in the Gospels. Indeed, people then did not think of preserving the Apostle's handwriting, but rather of getting a clean and new edition of the life and teaching of their Master Jesus.

183. What then do we learn from the Gospels, the most important part of our Bible? This at any rate, that God had taught the people in the world through Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, and the Prophets simple lessons first, and then harder and more perfect lessons, until through Jesus He taught the world the highest lessons possible, the Perfect Laws of Righteousness, which Jesus also lived up to, proclaiming Himself to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the World.

184. Such was the life, and such were the titles, of the little Babe that was born in the stable of Bethlehem; of the Boy Who worked in the carpenter's shop; of Him Who went about doing so much good; of the King Who set up the most marvellous Kingdom in the world; of the Wonderful and good Being that met the criminal's death; of the wonderful One Who returned from the grave.—God give you strength to follow a little in His footsteps, and to be a helpful member in the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER XI

OTHER WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

185. Supposing you were out at a Boy Scout's Camp, and a history of the Scout Camp was put together in this way. First of all, a diary of one of the boys who had been there off and on during the summer, had seen some of the camp life himself, and had taken pains to get news from the other boys; first of all, a diary; then the most important letters that passed between the boys and their parents; then a great essay on camp life;—if we had these three things, a diary, letters, and the essay to read, we would have a very good idea of the camp life. So it is in the New Testament, the other writings than the Gospels give us a history of the early Church life in the Apostles' time. First a diary, the Acts of the Apostles, by St. Luke, part of which he had seen himself, part of which he wrote from the information of others; second, letters called Epistles, written by the Apostles, and then the essay, the last book, the Revelation of St. John,—Diary, Letters, Essay.

186. But before the history of the Boy Scout's Camp could be written, the camp must have been organized, and in existence for some time. So before the history of the Church could have been written, the Church must have been in existence. The Church came first, then

the New Testament; but when the New Testament was written, it made the Church wonderfully strong.

187. The Church grew by Visions and Power which the Apostles received. Persecution did not make the Apostles tremble, but seemed to give them strength. When the disciples were gathered together there appeared unto them tongues like as of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and went out and spoke in other languages than their own. They were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they added great numbers to the Church; and God must know best how to begin His Church.

188. The Power which Jesus had over disease He handed on to the Apostles. A boy is servant to a doctor. He sees the doctor mixing certain powders to cure certain diseases. The doctor knows how he cures, but the boy does not. Yet after the doctor dies the boy by using the powders properly may cure, as long as the powders last. So the servants of Jesus entered a little into His secret of power over disease, but did not understand how He cured, yet were able to cure people—so long as the power lasted.

189. You will remember also about St. Paul's vision of Jesus on His way to Damascus, which turned him from persecuting the Church into the Churst's most energetic worker, after some years of deep meditation. "I was not disobedient to the Heavenly vision," says St. Paul afterwards to King Agrippa. St. Paul spread the Church through all the known civilized world, travelling on long journeys, establishing Churches, and writing letters to them afterwards. St. Paul is the last of the great men of the Bible, the last of those whom God chose as His great messengers in Bible times. What

a magnificent list, leading up to and helping the work of Jesus in the world, Abraham who made God his friend, Moses who formed a nation to do God's will, Samuel who gave that nation education, David who headed the nation in Kingship, poetry and penitence, Isaiah the greatest of the Prophets, Peter the energetic leader of the early Church, John the beloved disciple, closer to Jesus and His thoughts than any other, Paul the first missionary spreading the Church throughout the world.

190. Would you like to go hunting the thimble again to find out who was the author of the Acts of the Apostles? Well, the writers of the early church tell us Luke was the author of the Acts of the Apostles as well as of St. Luke's Gospel. Who was St. Luke? St. Paul calls him in one of his epistles the beloved physician. He was, therefore, a companion of St. Paul, and a companion of St. Paul must have written the Acts, for he frequently writes, "We" did this and "We" did that. But there were other companions of St. Paul. Yes, but we are playing this game in a doctor's house, and the thimble, or author's name, is hidden behind the bandages and surgical instruments of Luke the physician. St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts have introductions to the same person, Theophilus, in a different manner from all the other Gospels and Epistles, but just like the medical essays were begun in those days. Many are the medical names used in St. Lukes's Gospel and the Acts, amongst which may be mentioned the undergirding of the ship in chapter twenty-eight and the twenty-sixth verse, where the word undergirding means bandaging.

191. St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles then is like the diary of the early church; he had seen some of the

church life himself, and had taken pains to get information on the part he had not seen. Now we come to consider the letters or epistles of the Apostles. When you sit down to write a letter to someone you generally begin, "Dear Mr. so and so," or something like that, and sign your name at the end, say John Smith. But that is not the way they wrote letters in St. Paul's time. Supposing you were writing to your master in the style of St. Paul's day, you would write, "John Smith, a pupil of your school, to my teacher greeting." If you want to see a letter of St. Paul's day turn to the twenty-third chapter and the twenty-sixth verse in the Acts of the Apostles.

192. The Epistles or Letters of the Apostles are not placed in the Bible in the order in which they were written, but like the prophecies in the Old Testament they are put in groups. St. Paul's Epistles first, then James, Peter, John and Jude. Some of these were Letters to different churches or to private persons or to a group of churches. There are one or two things that you might like to know about the Epistles. First of all, they were nearly all written before the four Gospels were written, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians probably being first written. Then if you ever hear clergymen giving out the portion of the Bible in the Epistles they are going to read, you will notice they say, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, except in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which they give out without any name of Apostle attached to it, just, the Epistle to the Hebrews. This is because most scholars consider that St. Paul did not write this Epistle, the titles above

the different books of the Bible being as you know no part of the original Bible.

193. There is no need for you to read the Epistles through as you would be very much puzzled at the language in them if you had not a good book to explain them. Begin by reading and thinking over these chapters which I put here for you—Romans 12,—I. Corinthians, 2, 13 and 15—II. Corinthians 4 and 5,—I. Thessalonians 4, — II. Thessalonians 3, — Ephesians 6,—Philippians 2,—Hebrews 11 and 12,—James 1. There are other passages, but these will be enough to begin your study with, then read carefully the magnificent first chapter in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

194. You have looked at the diary of St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, you have looked at the Letters of St. Paul, there now remains the Essay, or the Revelation of St. John the Divine. This is partly an address to seven churches which had been built up in different parts of the world, and partly a great pictorial description of what was happening at the time, and of what would happen in the end. But you must always remember it is pictorial language. So now you ought to know something about the Bible, how it has been put together, from the pre-historic times to the great Essay of St. John the Divine,—how God had been teaching the people of the world through His great servants of the Old Testament, through Jesus in the New Testament until we say the Bible is the Word of God.

195. You now know how God's messages were given slowly but surely, easy Lessons first, and then harder and more perfect ones until Jesus gave God's Perfect Laws of Righteousness. Perhaps you would like in your school to jump right into the top form

without having to work and study in the primary and lower grades. But for some reason known to God He has not made you or your brain so that you could do that. So we might say why could not Jesus have come at first and told the world then the Perfect Laws of Righteousness; well, for some reason, and certainly a very good reason, known to God, He has not made the world or the people in it to live in ease with no hard work or study. Hard work and study help to make character, and it is not dolls that God is making but characters.

196. You now know that in the times before history was written God spoke through the pre-historic stories of the Creation, Garden of Eden, Flood, and Tower of Babel, this first simple message and lesson, —God will punish wicked doers, but help good people. That through Abraham God spoke his second message and Lesson,—I am a Friend Who speaks to you and to Whom you may speak. That through Moses these lessons were written out. That through the wars of Joshua and the Judges God gave this message,— "Though you sin, if you come back to me and ask me for help, sorrowful for your wickedness, I will help you." That through David God taught that the worst sin for ourselves was the sin we were not sorry for. That through the Prophets the world was learning to be good from love of God and Holiness. That through Jesus the Perfect Laws of Righteousness were given and lived. That the Kingdom of God founded by Jesus was lived by the early church whose history we have in the Diary, Letters, and Essays, of St. Luke, the Apostles and St. John;—Messages and Lessons from God,—no wonder we call the Bible the Word of God.

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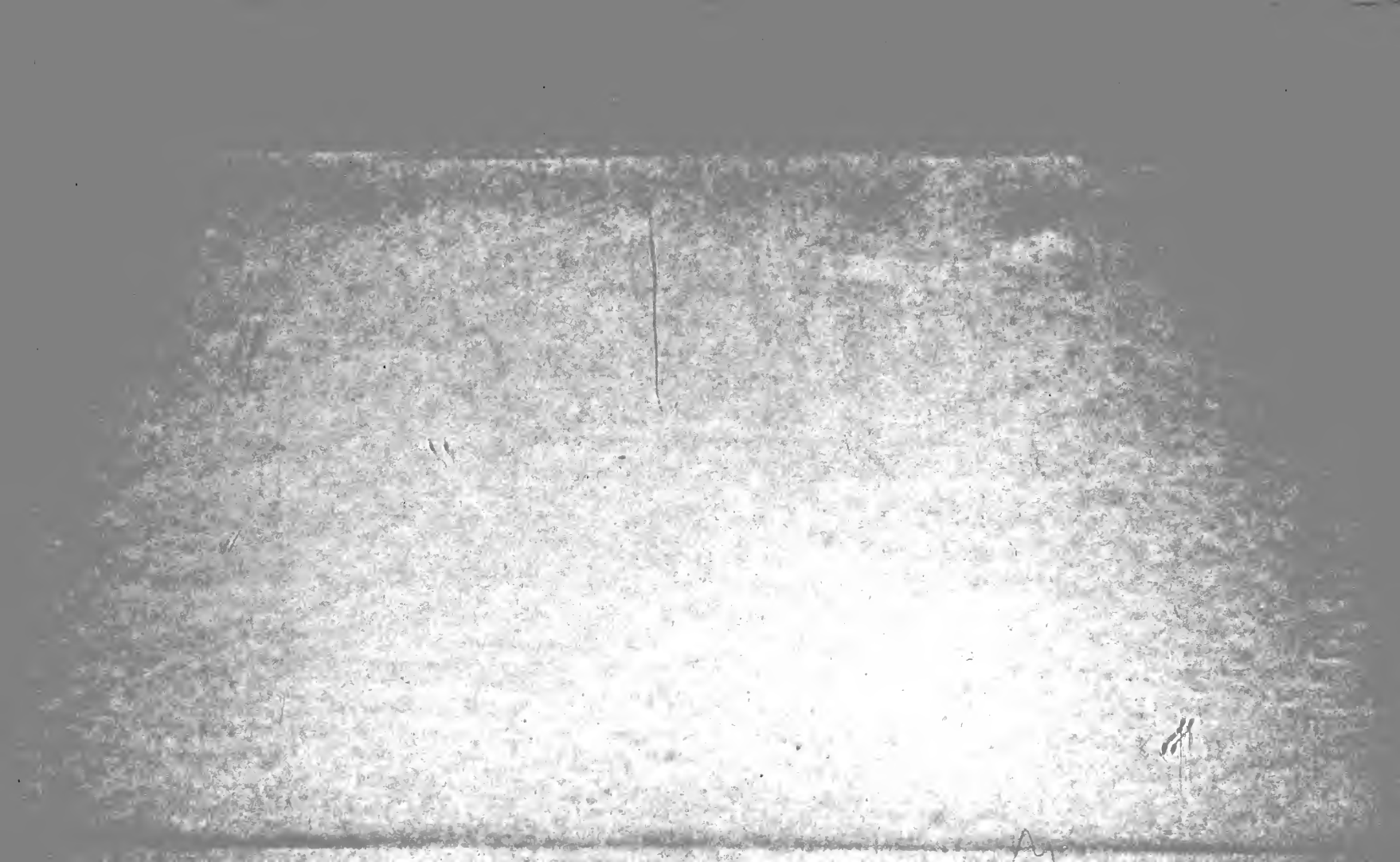

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